

# **TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

## **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

West Virginia Wesleyan College ("the College") is committed to creating and maintaining a learning and work environment that is free from discrimination.

This Title IX Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy (the "Policy") prohibits sex-based discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in all operations of the College, as well as discrimination of all protected classes as outlined in West Virginia Wesleyan College's Non-Discrimination Statement. The Policy is intended to meet the College's obligations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"); the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act"), as amended by the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 ("VAWA"), with respect to its application to sex-based misconduct; and other applicable law and regulations.

The College is committed to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression and the Policy should be interpreted, and will be applied, consistent with both of these principles.

The Policy also prohibits retaliation against an individual: (1) who makes a report or files a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination; (2) about whom a report is made or against whom a Formal Complaint is filed; (3) who participates in the reporting, investigation, or adjudication of possible violations of this Policy; or (4) who engages in good faith opposition to what another individual reasonably believes to be Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination under this Policy.

The College's Title IX Coordinator is responsible for administering the Policy and related procedures. Any inquiries about the Policy or procedures should be referred to the College's Title IX Coordinator, Alison Whitehair, who may be contacted as follows:

Student Development Suite  
Benedum Campus Center  
304-473-8604  
titleix@wwvc.edu

## **II. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

West Virginia Wesleyan College does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national or ethnic origin, creed, ancestry, marital/family status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, religion, age, disability or blindness, or any other characteristic protected by local, state or federal law in the administration of its admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, educational programs, employment, athletic programs, co-curricular activities, or other College administered programs.

### III. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to all members of the College community. This includes, but is not limited to, full and part-time students; full and part-time employees, including faculty members, staff, student employees, and temporary and contract employees; and certain third parties, including applicants for admission and employment, visitors, employees of College contractors, and individuals who are participating in a College Education Program or Activity, but who are neither enrolled in an academic program/course at the College nor employed by the College (e.g. individuals participating in a College summer camp or attending a College Education Program or Activity by invitation or that is open to the public). The Policy applies regardless of the gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation of the parties.

This Policy prohibits Title IX Sexual Harassment committed against any member of the College community in the United States and within a College Education Program or Activity.

The College retains the discretion to determine that conduct that occurs outside of the United States or outside of a College Education Program or Activity, including online conduct that is not part of a College Education Program or Activity, is within the scope of this Policy. In making this determination, the College will consider the severity of the alleged conduct, the risk of ongoing harm, whether both parties are members of the College community, the impact on College programs or activities, and whether off-campus conduct is part of a series of actions that occurred both on and off campus.

This Policy supersedes any conflicting information in any other College policy with respect to the definitions and procedures applicable to alleged Title IX Sexual Harassment. This Policy and the related procedures provide the exclusive remedy for alleged Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination.

### IV. DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Conduct Prohibited by this Policy

**Title IX Sexual Harassment:** conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- A College employee (including a faculty member) conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the College on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct. Also known as quid pro quo sexual harassment.
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to a College Education Program or Activity.
- **Sexual Assault:** any sexual act directed against another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Sexual assault can occur between individuals of the same or different sexes and/or genders. Sexual Assault includes the following:
  - **Rape:** the carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her/their temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity;
  - **Sodomy:** oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her/their age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity;

- **Sexual Assault with an Object:** to use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her/their age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity;
  - **Fondling:** the touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her/their age or because of his/her/their temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity;
  - **Incest:** sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law; or
  - **Statutory Rape:** sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.
- **Domestic Violence:** any felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the State of West Virginia and, in the case of victim services, includes the use or attempted use of physical abuse or sexual abuse, or a pattern of any other coercive behavior committed, enabled, or solicited to gain or maintain power and control over a victim, including verbal, psychological, economic, or technological abuse that may or may not constitute criminal behavior, by a person who—
  - is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, or person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim;
  - is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
  - shares a child in common with the victim; or
  - commits acts against a minor or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction
- **Dating violence:** an act of violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and where the existence of such a relationship is determined based on a consideration of the (1) length of the relationship, (2) type of relationship, and (3) frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship.
- **Abuse in Later Life:** neglect, abandonment, economic abuse, or willful harm of an adult aged 50 or older by an individual in an ongoing relationship of trust with the victim; or domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking of an adult aged 50 or older by any individual; and does not include self-neglect.
- **Stalking:** a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to (1) fear for his/her/their safety or the safety of others, or (2) suffer substantial emotional distress. This policy specifically addresses only sex-based stalking.
- **Economic Abuse:** in the context of domestic violence, dating violence, and abuse in later life; behavior that is coercive, deceptive, or unreasonably controls or restrains a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources to which they are entitled, including using coercion, fraud, or manipulation to—
  - restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information;
  - unfairly use a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, for one's own advantage; or

- exert undue influence over a person's financial and economic behavior or decisions, including forcing default on joint or other financial obligations, exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship, or failing or neglecting to act in the best interests of a person to whom one has a fiduciary duty.
- **Technological Abuse:** an act or pattern of behavior that occurs within domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking and is intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor, except as otherwise permitted by law, another person, that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to: internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.

**Retaliation:** an adverse action or other form of negative treatment, including but not limited to intimidation, threats, coercion, discrimination or harassment, carried out in response to a good-faith reporting of or opposition to Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination; an individual's or group's participation, including testifying or assisting in the College's Title IX Procedures; an individual's or group's refusal to participate in the College's Title IX Procedures; or other form of good faith opposition to what an individual reasonably believes to be Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination under this Policy.

Individuals are also protected from retaliation for making good faith requests for accommodations on the basis of religion or disability.

To be a Policy violation, the challenged actions or treatment must be sufficiently serious to discourage a reasonable person from further reporting, participation, or opposition.

Charging an individual with a Policy violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course the College's Title IX process does not constitute Retaliation. The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment also does not constitute Retaliation.

### **Additional Definitions**

**Official with Authority:** an official of the College with the authority to institute corrective action on behalf of the College and notice to whom causes the College to respond to Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination. For a full list of College officials that meet this definition, see Appendix A attached to this Policy.

**Complainant:** an individual who is alleged to be the victim of Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination.

### **Consent:**

- a) clear, and
- b) knowing, and
- c) voluntary
- d) words or actions,
- e) that give permission for specific sexual activity.

Additional Clarification on Consent:

- Consent is active, not passive.

- Silence, in and of itself, cannot be interpreted as consent.
- Consent can be given by words or actions, as long as those words or actions create mutually understandable permission regarding willingness to engage in (and the conditions of) sexual activity.
- Consent to any one form of sexual activity cannot automatically imply consent to any other forms of sexual activity.
- Previous relationships or prior consent cannot imply consent to future sexual acts.
- Consent can be withdrawn once given, as long as that withdrawal is clearly communicated. Once consent is withdrawn, sexual activity must stop reasonably immediately.
- In order to give consent, one must be of legal age.
- Sexual activity with someone you know to be or should know to be incapacitated (see further definition below) constitutes a violation of this policy.
- An individual is unable to freely give consent when coerced into sexual activity, such as, for example, through the use of physical force, threat of physical or emotional harm, undue pressure, isolation, or confinement.

**College Education Program or Activity:** all operations of the College, including (1) those locations, events, and circumstances where the College exercises substantial control and (2) any building owned or controlled by a student organization recognized by the College. Conduct that occurs on-campus occurs within the College's Education Program or Activity. Conduct that occurs off campus in locations or at events with no connection to the College is unlikely to occur in the College's Education Program or Activity.

**Formal Complaint:** a document filed by a Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination against a Respondent and requesting that the College investigate the allegation of Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination. A Formal Complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by email.

**Incapacitation:** a state beyond drunkenness or intoxication in which someone cannot make rational, reasonable decisions because they lack the capacity to give knowing consent (e.g., to understand the "who, what, when, where, why, or how" of their sexual interaction). A person is not necessarily incapacitated merely as a result of drinking or using drugs. The impact of alcohol and other drugs varies from person to person.

- Indicators that an individual may be incapacitated include, but are not limited to, inability to communicate coherently, inability to dress or undress without assistance, clumsiness, poor judgment, difficulty concentrating, slurred speech, vomiting, combativeness, emotional volatility, difficulty walking without assistance, loss of coordination, or inability to perform other physical or cognitive tasks without assistance.
- An individual's level of intoxication may change over a period of time based on a variety of subjective factors, including the amount of substance intake, speed of intake, body mass, and metabolism.
- An individual who is incapacitated is unable to give consent to sexual activity. States of incapacitation include sleep, unconsciousness, or any other state where the individual is unaware that sexual conduct is occurring. Incapacitation may also exist because of a mental or developmental disability that impairs the ability to consent to sexual activity.

- In evaluating consent in cases of alleged incapacitation, the College asks two questions: (1) did the person initiating sexual activity know that the other party was incapacitated? And if not, (2) should a sober, reasonable person in the same situation have known that the other party was incapacitated? If the answer to either of these questions is “YES,” consent was absent and the conduct is likely a violation of this Policy.
- No matter the level of an individual’s intoxication, if that individual has not agreed to engage in sexual activity, there is no consent.

**Report:** formal notification to the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority, either orally or in writing, of the belief that Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination occurred.

**Respondent:** the person or office, program, department, or group against whom an allegation or complaint is made; i.e., the individual(s), organizational unit(s), or group(s) who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination.

**Responsible Employee:** an individual designated by College policy who is required to report information regarding Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. These employees include:

- Campus Safety and Security Staff
- Full-time faculty
- Staff members with significant responsibility for student and campus activities, including coaching staff and athletic trainers
- Campus Life student employees, including Resident Assistants, Resident Directors and Community Directors

**Student:** an individual who was selected for part-time, full-time, special, associate, transfer, exchange, or any other enrollment, membership, or matriculation in or at the College.

**Restorative Practice:** practice relating to a specific harm that:

- is community-based and unaffiliated with any civil or criminal legal process;
- is initiated by a victim of the harm;
- involves, on a voluntary basis and without any evidence of coercion or intimidation of any victim of the harm by any individual who committed the harm or anyone associated with any such individual:
  - One or more individuals who committed the harm;
  - One or more victims of the harm; and
  - the community affected by the harm through one or more representatives of the community;
- shall include and has the goal of:
  - collectively seeking accountability from one or more individuals who committed the harm;
  - developing a written process whereby one or more individuals who committed the harm will take responsibility for the actions that caused harm to one or more victims of the harm; and
  - developing a written course of action plan
- shall include and has the goal of:
  - that is responsive to the needs of one or more victims of the harm; and

- upon which one or more victims, one or more individuals who committed the harm, and the community can agree; and
- is conducted in a victim services framework that protects the safety and supports the autonomy of one or more victims of the harm and the community.

## **V. REPORTING AND RESOURCE OPTIONS**

### **Reporting Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination to the College**

The College encourages all individuals to report allegations of Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination directly to the Title IX Coordinator or to an Official with Authority (see Appendix A for a complete list of Officials with Authority). Any person, whether or not they are the Complainant, may report Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators.

Reporting an incident of Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority allows the College to provide Supportive Measures (as described below), but does not necessarily result in the initiation of a grievance procedure.

An initial report may be made in person, in writing, by telephone, by email, or via the online report form found at [www.wvwc.edu/titleix](http://www.wvwc.edu/titleix).

To make a report directly to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators, contact:

- Alison Whitehair: Student Development Suite, Benedum Campus Center
  - [titleix@wvwc.edu](mailto:titleix@wvwc.edu) or [whitehair.a@wvwc.edu](mailto:whitehair.a@wvwc.edu), 304-473-8604
- Vickie Crowder (Deputy): Personnel Office, Admin Building
  - [Crowder\\_v@wvwc.edu](mailto:Crowder_v@wvwc.edu), 304-473-8431
- Alisa Lively (Deputy): Office of Campus Life, Benedum Campus Center
  - [Lively\\_a@wvwc.edu](mailto:Lively_a@wvwc.edu), 304-473-8443
- Jackie Hinton (Deputy): Athletics, Rockefeller Center
  - [Hinton.j@wvwc.edu](mailto:Hinton.j@wvwc.edu), 304-473-8507

A report can also be made anonymously by telephone, in writing, or electronically through the website reporting system. Depending on the level of information available about the incident or the individuals involved, the College's ability to respond to an anonymous report may be limited. The College will, however, take whatever steps it deems appropriate and in the best interests of the overall College community, consistent with the information available.

Only a report to the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority will trigger the College's obligation to respond to an allegation of Title IX Sexual Harassment.

Any report involving a minor will be shared with law enforcement agencies and child protective services.

### **Required Reports by Responsible Employees**

Responsible Employees are expected to be discreet, but are required by the College to promptly consult with Title IX Coordinator by telephone, email, or online reporting form to share known details of an incident of alleged Title IX Sexual Harassment.

The following have been designated by the College as Responsible Employees:

- Full-time faculty
- Full-time staff with significant responsibility for student and campus activities, as well as all coaching and athletic training staff
- Campus Life student employees, including Resident Assistants, Resident Directors and Community Directors

A Responsible Employee's receipt of information will not automatically trigger an obligation to respond to an allegation of Title IX Sexual Harassment. Only a report to the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority will trigger the College's obligation to respond to an allegation of Title IX Sexual Harassment.

### **Emergency Resources and Law Enforcement**

Emergency medical assistance and campus safety/law enforcement assistance are available 24/7 both on and off campus. Individuals are encouraged to contact law enforcement and seek medical treatment as soon as possible following an incident that may pose a threat to safety or physical well-being or following a potential criminal offense.

### **Law Enforcement Assistance**

Members of the College community who believe their safety or the safety of others is threatened or who have experienced or witnessed Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination that may be criminal in nature should immediately call Campus Safety and Security at 304-473-8011, or call 911 to reach local law enforcement.

### **Emergency Medical Assistance**

The College encourages individuals who experience sexual misconduct to seek appropriate medical assistance and medical evaluation as promptly as possible. This provides the opportunity to address physical well-being or health concerns, preserve any available evidence, and begin a timely investigative and remedial response. Even if physical injuries are not apparent, you may want to have an examination and discuss risks with a health care provider.

For emergencies or life-threatening situations, call 911.

### ***Medical Attention***

Community Care of West Virginia  
Nurse on duty: Monday-Friday 8:00am-4pm  
304-517-3774

St. Joseph's Hospital  
1 Amalia Drive, Buckhannon, WV  
(304) 473-2000

### ***Emotional Care, Counseling, and Crisis Response***

WVWC Counseling Center  
Open Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm  
304-473-8803  
Counseling@wwwc.edu



Centers Against Violence  
Upshur County: (304) 473-0070  
24 Hour Hotline: 1-800-339-1185  
Text Line: 304-840-SAFE  
centersagainstviolence.org

### **Confidential Resources**

Confidential Resources are employees or offices who are available to provide individuals with assistance, support, and additional information.

Confidential Resources are prohibited from disclosing confidential information unless (1) given permission by the person who disclosed the information; (2) there is an imminent threat of harm to self or others; (3) the conduct involves suspected abuse of a minor; or (4) as otherwise required or permitted by law or court order. Confidential Resources may be required to report non-identifying information to Campus Safety and Security for Clery Act crime reporting purposes.

The following College resources can provide information and support in a confidential setting:

- Director of Religious and Spiritual Life
- Debra Dean Murphy, Associate Professor of Religious Studies
- WWC Director of Counseling Services

### **Timeframe for Reporting**

In order to maintain and support a community that is respectful and free from Title IX Sexual Harassment and to maximize the College's ability to respond promptly and effectively, the College urges individuals to come forward with reports of Title IX Sexual Harassment as soon as possible. The sooner a report is made, the more effectively it can be investigated, e.g. while witnesses are still available, memories are fresh, and documentation may still be available. There is, however, no time limitation for reporting Title IX Sexual Harassment.

## **VI. AMNESTY**

Sometimes students are reluctant to seek help after experiencing Title IX Sexual Harassment may be reluctant to help others who may have experienced Title IX Sexual Harassment, because they fear being held responsible by the College or law enforcement for drug use or underage alcohol consumption.

The College generally will not pursue disciplinary action against a student who makes a good faith report to the College, or who participates as a party or witness in the grievance process related to Title IX Sexual Harassment, for personal consumption of alcohol or other drugs (underage or illegal) which would otherwise be a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, provided the misconduct did not endanger the health or safety of others. The College may, however, engage in an assessment or educational discussion or pursue other non-disciplinary options regarding alcohol or other drug use.

## **VII. PARTICIPANT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The College recognizes that privacy is important. The College will attempt to protect parties' privacy to the extent reasonably possible. The Title IX Coordinator, investigators, advisors, facilitators of informal resolution, hearing officers, and any others participating in the process on behalf of the College shall keep

the information obtained through the process private and, to the extent possible, confidential. All other participants in the process (including the Complainant, Respondent, non-College advisors, and witnesses) are encouraged to respect the privacy of the parties and the confidentiality of the proceedings and circumstances giving rise to the dispute and to discuss the matter only with those persons who have a genuine need to know.

While the College is committed to respecting the confidentiality of all parties involved in the process, it cannot guarantee complete confidentiality. Examples of situations in which confidentiality cannot be maintained include, but are not limited to, the following:

- When the College is required by law to disclose information (such as in response to a subpoena or court order).
- When disclosure of information is determined by the Title IX Coordinator to be necessary for conducting an effective investigation of the claim.
- When confidentiality concerns are outweighed by the College's interest in protecting the safety or rights of others.
- When a Formal Complaint is filed.

#### **VIII. INTAKE PROCESS FOR REPORTS OF TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION**

Once a report of Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination is made to or received by the Title IX Coordinator, the Title IX Coordinator shall review the report to determine appropriate next steps.

After receiving a report of conduct that, if true, would constitute Title IX Sexual Harassment as defined in this Policy, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the Complainant and:

- discuss the availability of Supportive Measures;
- explain that Supportive Measures are available with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment;
- inform the Complainant of the process for filing a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment; and
- inform the Complainant that even if they decide not to file a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator may do so by signing a Formal Complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator will also ensure that the Complainant receives a written explanation of available resources and options, including the following:

- Support and assistance available through College resources, including the Complainant's option to seek Supportive Measures regardless of whether they choose to participate in a College or law enforcement investigation;
- The Complainant's option to seek medical treatment and information on preserving potentially key forensic and other evidence;
- The process for filing a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment, if appropriate;
- The College's procedural options including Formal and Informal resolution;
- The Complainant's right to an advisor of the Complainant's choosing;

- The College's prohibition of Retaliation against the Complainant, the Respondent, the witnesses, and any reporting parties, along with a statement that the College will take prompt action when Retaliation is reported (and how to report); and
- The opportunity to meet with the Title IX Coordinator in person to discuss the Complainant's resources, rights, and options.

If other Policy violations are invoked, such as protected class harassment or discrimination, please see Appendix B for a description of the procedures applicable to the resolution of such offenses, known as "Process B." Process B can also apply to sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined above) when jurisdiction does not fall within Process A, as determined by the Title IX Coordinator.

## **IX. SUPPORTIVE MEASURES**

Supportive Measures are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services, accommodations, and other assistance that the College offers and may put in place, without fee or charge, after receiving notice of possible Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination via a report to the Title IX Coordinator or an Official with Authority. Supportive Measures are designed to restore or preserve access to the College's Education Program and Activity, protect the safety of all parties and the College's educational environment, or deter Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination, while not being punitive in nature or unreasonably burdening any party.

Supportive Measures are available regardless of whether the matter is reported to the College for the purpose of initiating any formal grievance proceeding and before, after, and regardless of whether a Formal Complaint is filed. A Complainant who requests Supportive Measures retains the right to file a Formal Complaint, either at the time the Supportive Measure is requested or at a later date. Any Complainant that requests Supportive Measures will be informed in writing of their right to simultaneously or subsequently file a Formal Complaint pursuant to this Policy.

The Title IX Coordinator will contact a Complainant after receiving notice of possible Title IX Sexual Harassment (1) to discuss the availability of Supportive Measures and (2) to explain that Supportive Measures are available with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment. The Title IX Coordinator will consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to implementation of Supportive Measures.

Supportive Measures may also be requested by and made available to Respondents, witnesses, and other impacted members of the College community. The Title IX Coordinator will ultimately serve as the point of contact for any individual requesting Supportive Measures.

To determine the appropriate Supportive Measure(s) to be implemented, the College conducts an individualized assessment based on the unique facts and circumstances of a situation. The Title IX Coordinator may work with other administrators when necessary (members of Behavior Intervention Team, VP of Academic Affairs, Registrar, etc.) to determine reasonable measures and accommodations. Whether a possible Supportive Measure would unreasonably burden the other party is a fact-specific determination made by the College in its discretion that takes into account the nature of the education programs, activities, opportunities and benefits in which an individual is participating.

Examples of Supportive Measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Academic support services and accommodations, including the ability to reschedule classes, exams and assignments, transfer course sections, or withdraw from courses without penalty;
- Academic schedule modifications (typically to separate Complainant and Respondent);
- Work schedule or job assignment modifications (for College employment);
- Changes in work or housing location;
- An escort to ensure safe movement on campus;
- On-campus counseling services and/or assistance in connecting to community-based counseling services;
- Assistance in connecting to community-based medical services;
- No contact directives (to instruct individuals to stop all attempts at communication or other interaction with one another);
- Placing limitations on an individual's access to certain College facilities or activities;
- Work schedule or job assignment modifications, including suspending employment with or without pay consistent with any applicable written procedures (for College positions);
- Information about and/or assistance with obtaining personal protection orders;
- Leaves of absence;
- Increased monitoring and security of certain areas of the campus; or
- A combination of any of these measures.

The College will maintain Supportive Measures provided to the Complainant or Respondent as confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the College's ability to provide the Supportive Measures.

## **X. EMERGENCY REMOVAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE**

### **Emergency Removal of a Student-Respondent**

Where there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any students or other individuals arising from reported Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination, the College can remove a Student-Respondent from the College's education Program or Activity and issue any necessary related no-trespass and no-contact orders. The College will make the decision to remove a Student-Respondent from the College's Education Program or Activity based on an individualized assessment and risk analysis completed by the Behavior Intervention Team. If the College makes such a decision, the Student-Respondent will be provided with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

### **Administrative Leave of an Employee/Faculty-Respondent**

The College may place an Employee/Faculty-Respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a Formal Complaint. An employee alleged to have committed Title IX Sexual Harassment or Discrimination will not be placed on administrative leave unless and until a Formal Complaint has been filed with the College. The College, in its discretion and based on the circumstances, will determine whether any administrative leave imposed is to be imposed with or without pay or benefits.

# **Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures**

## **I. FORMAL COMPLAINTS OF TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

### **Filing a Formal Complaint**

A Complainant has the option to file a Formal Complaint against a Respondent alleging Title IX Sexual Harassment and requesting that the College investigate those allegations. In order to file a Formal Complaint, the Complainant should contact the Title IX Coordinator and sign the College's Formal Complaint form. This may be done in person, or via email by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.

When a Complainant does not wish to file a Formal Complaint on their own behalf, the Title IX Coordinator may, in their discretion, file a Formal Complaint by signing the Formal Complaint form. When making that determination, the Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the request of the Complainant in light of the duty to ensure the safety of the campus and comply with federal law. When the Title IX Coordinator signs a Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not the Complainant or otherwise a party. While the Complainant may choose to not participate in the grievance process initiated by the Title IX Coordinator's signing of a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment, the Complainant will still be treated as a party entitled to inspect and review evidence and to receive all notices, including the notice of allegations, the notice of hearing, and the notice of outcome. At no time will the College coerce or retaliate against a Complainant in order to convince the Complainant to participate in the grievance process.

After a Formal Complaint is filed, the matter will proceed to either the Informal Resolution process or Formal Resolution process, as described below. A Formal Complaint must be filed before the College can commence an investigation or the Informal Resolution process under the Title IX Sexual Harassment Procedures.

### **Mandatory Dismissal of Formal Complaint for Title IX Purposes**

When the Title IX Coordinator receives a Formal Complaint alleging conduct, which, if true, would meet the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will evaluate the allegations in the Formal Complaint to determine whether the allegations satisfy the following conditions:

- The Title IX Sexual Harassment conduct is alleged to have been perpetrated against a person in the United States;
- The Title IX Sexual Harassment conduct is alleged to have taken place within the College's programs and activities; and
- At the time of the filing or signing of the Formal Complaint, the Complainant is participating in or attempting to participate in the College's programs or activities.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that all of the above conditions are satisfied, the College will address the Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment under these Procedures.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that the allegations in the Formal Complaint do not meet the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment or that not all of the conditions above are satisfied, the College will dismiss the Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes. However, if the College dismisses the Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes, it may, in its discretion, address the Formal Complaint under other College issued policies, as appropriate.

Additionally, if the Title IX Coordinator investigates a matter as Title IX Sexual Harassment based on the allegations in the Formal Complaint, but, during the course of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator determines that all of the above conditions are no longer satisfied, the College will dismiss the Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes and instead pursue the matter under other policies and procedures (i.e. Student Code of Conduct, employee handbook, etc), as appropriate and applicable, or will dismiss the Formal Complaint in its entirety.

If the Title IX Coordinator determines that a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment will not be adjudicated under the Title IX Procedures, either at the outset after reviewing the Formal Complaint or during the course of the investigation, the parties will receive simultaneous written notice of the dismissal and the reasons for that dismissal.

Either party may appeal the decision to dismiss a Formal Complaint as explained below in Section XVI. The procedures below apply only to qualifying allegations of sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined above) involving students, staff, administrators, or faculty members.

If other Policy violations are invoked, such as protected class harassment or discrimination, please see Appendix B for a description of the procedures applicable to the resolution of such offenses, known as "Process B." Process B can also apply to sexual harassment (including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, as defined above) when jurisdiction does not fall within Process A, as determined by the Title IX Coordinator.

### **Discretionary Dismissal of Formal Complaint for Title IX Purposes**

In addition to the reasons discussed above in Section XI(B) regarding mandatory dismissals, the College may, in its discretion, choose to dismiss a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein, if at any time during the investigation or hearing:

- A Complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the Complainant would like to withdraw the Formal Complaint or any allegations therein;
- The Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the recipient; or
- Specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the Formal Complaint or allegations therein.

The College retains discretion on a case-by-case basis to determine if it will dismiss a Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes based on any of the above reasons. Just because one or all of the conditions above are satisfied, does not mean the College will automatically dismiss the Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes as is the case with respect to the conditions listed in the "Mandatory Dismissal" section above. Instead, the College will determine if such a decision is appropriate under the circumstances.

If the College dismisses a Formal Complaint for Title IX purposes, it may in its discretion address the Formal Complaint under another policy or procedure, as appropriate.

The parties will receive simultaneous written notice of the dismissal and the reasons for that dismissal. Either party may appeal the decision to dismiss as explained below in Section XVI.

### **Consolidation of Formal Complaints**

In their discretion, the Title IX Coordinator may consolidate multiple Formal Complaints for resolution under this Policy. Consolidation might involve a single Complainant or multiple Complainants, a single Respondent or multiple Respondents, and allegations of conduct that is temporally or logically connected (even where some of that alleged conduct is not Title IX Sexual Harassment or where the above conditions are not met with respect to some of the alleged conduct). If Formal Complaints involving multiple Complainants and/or multiple Respondents are consolidated, each party will have access to all of the information being considered; including as provided by all involved Complainants, all involved Respondents, and all involved witnesses. The decision to consolidate Formal Complaints is not subject to appeal.

## **II. NOTICE OF ALLEGATIONS**

If a Complainant files, or the Title IX Coordinator signs, a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment within the scope of this Policy, the Title IX Coordinator will simultaneously send both parties a written Notice of Allegations that contains the following:

- Notice that the Informal and Formal Resolution processes comply with the requirements of Title IX;
- Notice of the allegations potentially constituting Title IX Sexual Harassment, providing sufficient detail for a response to be prepared before any initial interview, including (1) identities of the parties, if known; (2) the conduct allegedly constituting Title IX Sexual Harassment; and (3) the date and location of the alleged incident, if known;
- A statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged Title IX Sexual Harassment and a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process;
- Notice that each party may have an advisor of their choice who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney and who may inspect and review evidence;
- Information regarding the availability of support and assistance through College resources and the opportunity to meet with the Title IX Coordinator in person to discuss resources, rights, and options;
- Notice of the College's prohibition of Retaliation by the Complainant, the Respondent, and witnesses; that the College will take prompt action when Retaliation is reported; and how to report acts of Retaliation; and
- Notice that the Student Code of Conduct prohibits acts of dishonesty; knowingly making false statements and knowingly submitting false information to College personnel during the grievance process.

If, during the course of an investigation, the Title IX Coordinator decides to investigate additional allegations about the Complainant or Respondent relating to the same facts or circumstances but not included in the earlier written notice, the Title IX Coordinator will provide an amended Notice of Allegations to the parties.

### **III. TIMELINES**

Throughout these Procedures, the College designates timelines for different steps of the process. The Title IX Coordinator has authority to extend such timelines for good cause. Good cause may include, but is not limited to, considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disability. In the case of such an extension, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the affected parties of the extension, including the reason(s) for the extension.

The phrase "business days" shall refer to those days ordinarily recognized by the College administrative calendar as workdays.

### **IV. ADVISORS**

Throughout the resolution process (whether informal or investigative), the Complainant and a Respondent may each have an advisor of their choice to provide support and guidance. An advisor may accompany the Complainant/Respondent to any meeting with the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, or to a hearing.

Prior to the hearing, a party's advisor has an exclusively non-speaking role, and may not otherwise present evidence, argue, or assert any right on behalf of the party. And, at the hearing, an advisor's role is limited to quietly conferring with the Complainant/Respondent through written correspondence or whisper. An advisor may not speak for the party they are supporting or address any other participant or the Hearing Officer except as necessary to conduct cross-examination as explained below. Advisors must conduct the cross-examination of all witnesses directly, orally, and in real time at the hearing. Neither party may conduct cross-examinations personally.

The College (including any official acting on behalf of the College such as the Hearing Officer) has the right at all times to determine what constitutes appropriate behavior on the part of an advisor. For example, the College will not tolerate an advisor questioning a witness in an abusive, intimidating, or disrespectful manner. The College has the right to take appropriate steps to ensure compliance with the Policy and Procedures, including by placing limitations on the advisor's ability to participate in future meetings and proceedings.

### **V. INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

Informal Resolution is an alternative resolution process that does not include an investigation or hearing. Informal Resolution is typically a spectrum of facilitated, or structured, and adaptable processes between the Complainant, the Respondent, and/or other affected community members that seeks to identify and meet the needs of the Complainant while providing an opportunity for the Respondent to acknowledge harm and seek to repair the harm (to the extent possible) experienced by the Complainant and/or the College community.

Informal Resolution is not available in cases involving a Student-Complainant and Employee-Respondent. Additionally, the Informal Resolution process may not commence unless and until a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment is filed. Informal Resolution may be available, under appropriate circumstances, at any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility.



The Title IX Coordinator reserves the right to determine whether Informal Resolution is appropriate in a specific case. Before the Title IX Coordinator commences the Informal Resolution process, both parties must provide informed consent in writing. In addition, where both parties and the College determine that Informal Resolution is worth exploring, the College will provide the parties with a written notice disclosing:

- the allegations,
- the requirements of the Informal Resolution process, and
- any consequences resulting from participating or withdrawing from the process, including the records that may be maintained by the College.

At any time prior to reaching a resolution, either party may withdraw from the Informal Resolution process and proceed with the formal grievance process for resolving the Formal Complaint.

Once an Informal Resolution is agreed to by all parties, the resolution is binding and the parties generally are precluded from resuming or starting the formal grievance process related to that Formal Complaint. Any breach of the terms of an Informal Resolution agreement may result in disciplinary action.

## **VI. FORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

### **The Investigation**

An investigation affords both the Complainant and the Respondent an opportunity to submit information and other evidence and to identify witnesses. Although the parties have the option to submit evidence and suggest witnesses to be interviewed, the burden of gathering information in the investigation is with the College.

When the formal resolution process is initiated, the Title IX Coordinator will designate an investigator(s) who will be responsible for gathering evidence directly related to the allegations raised in a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment. The investigator(s) must be impartial, free of any actual conflict of interest, and have specific and relevant training and experience. Specifically, the investigator(s) will be trained on (1) issues of relevance; (2) the definitions in the Policy; (3) the scope of the College's Education Program or Activity; (4) how to conduct an investigation; and (4) how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias.

A Complainant or a Respondent who has concerns that the assigned investigator(s) cannot conduct a fair and unbiased review (e.g., has a personal connection with one of the parties or witnesses, etc.) may report those concerns to the Title IX Coordinator, who will assess the circumstances and determine whether a different investigator should be assigned to the matter.

### ***Investigation Timeframe***

The investigation of a Formal Complaint will typically conclude within 90 business days of the filing of the Formal Complaint. Any time the general timeframes for resolution will be delayed, the College will provide written notice to the parties of the delay, the cause of the delay, and an estimate of the anticipated additional time that will be needed as a result of the delay.

## **Interviews and Gathering Evidence**

### ***Interviews***

The investigator will interview the Complainant and Respondent in order to review the disciplinary process and to hear an overview of each party's account of the incident. Before any interview, the individual being interviewed will be informed in writing of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of the interview. Such notice will be provided with sufficient time for the individual to prepare for the interview. The Respondent will be informed in writing if, during the investigation, additional information is disclosed that may constitute additional Title IX Sexual Harassment under the Policy.

Following the interview, each party will be provided with a draft summary of their statement so that they have the opportunity to comment on the summary and ensure its accuracy and completeness. The parties' feedback may be attached or otherwise incorporated into the final investigative report to the extent deemed relevant by the investigator.

### ***Evidence***

During the interview, and as the investigator is gathering evidence, each party will be given the opportunity to identify witnesses and to provide other information, such as documents, communications, photographs, and other evidence. Although the College has the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility, all parties are expected to share any relevant information and/or any information that is requested by the investigator. Such information shared by the parties with the investigator may include both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.

The investigator will review all information identified or provided by the parties, as well as any other evidence they obtain. Evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations in the Formal Complaint will be shared with the parties for their review and comment, as described below.

### ***Draft Investigative Report and Opportunity to Inspect and Review Evidence***

After all the evidence is gathered, and the investigator has completed witness interviews, the investigator will prepare a draft investigative report. The investigator will send each party, and the party's advisor, if any, the draft investigative report.

The investigator will also provide the parties, and their advisors, if any, with copies of all evidence directly related to the allegations of the Formal Complaint that was gathered during the investigation. Before doing so, the investigator may redact information in the evidence that is not directly related to the allegations of the Formal Complaint; information prohibited from disclosure pursuant to a recognized legal privilege; and/or a party's medical or mental health information/records unless the party consents in writing to the disclosure. The evidence may be provided in either an electronic format or a hard copy.

The parties will have ten (10) business days to review the draft investigative report and evidence and to submit a written response. The parties' written responses must include any comments, feedback, additional documents, evidence, requests for additional investigation, names of additional witnesses, or any other information they deem relevant to the investigation. Any party providing new evidence in their written response should identify whether that evidence was previously available to them, and if so, why it was not previously provided. The parties' feedback will be attached to the final investigation report.

Generally, only information that is provided to, or otherwise obtained by, the investigator during the course of the investigation will be considered in the determination of whether a Policy violation occurred. Any and all information for consideration by the Hearing Panel must be provided to the investigator prior to the final investigation report and will not be allowed during the hearing unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such information was not reasonably available to the parties at the time of the investigation or that the evidence has significant relevance to a material fact at issue in the investigation. If, after the final investigation report is issued, a party provides or identifies evidence that they did not previously provide or identify despite that evidence being reasonably available to them during the investigation process, the Hearing Panel may, at their discretion, draw a negative inference from the party's delay in providing or identifying the evidence.

The investigator will review the feedback to the report, interview additional relevant witnesses (as the investigator deems appropriate).

### ***Final Investigative Report***

After the time has run for both parties to provide any written response to the draft investigative report and evidence, and after the investigator completes any additional investigation, the investigator will complete a final investigative report. The investigator will submit the final investigative report of relevant information to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will review the report for completeness and relevance, and direct further investigation as necessary before the report is provided to the Complainant and Respondent.

The investigator and/or Title IX Coordinator, as appropriate, may exclude and/or redact information or evidence from the final investigative report as follows:

- Information that is not relevant to the allegations raised in the Formal Complaint;
- Information about a Complainant's prior or subsequent sexual activity, unless such information about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior is offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the Respondent and are offered to prove consent; and
- Medical or mental health information, treatment and/or diagnosis, unless the party consents.

After the Title IX Coordinator reviews the report and any further investigation, if necessary, is completed, the final report will be shared with the Complainant, Respondent, and their advisors. The parties will have ten (10) business days to respond in writing to the final investigative report. The Complainant and Respondent must also submit in writing by that time the names of any witnesses the Complainant/Respondent wishes to testify and a summary of information each witness would provide through their testimony. Names of witnesses provided by the Complainant/Respondent will be shared with the other party.

After the ten-business-day deadline, the Complainant and Respondent may not provide any additional written information for the hearing, unless that information was not reasonably available prior to the closing of the ten-business-day window. The Hearing Panel Chair determines whether to grant exceptions to this ten-business-day deadline.

The Title IX Coordinator will determine what, if any, final changes or additions are made to the final investigative report based upon its review of the report and feedback as described above from the Complainant and Respondent.

The matter will then be referred to a Hearing Panel.

## **VII. HEARING PROCEDURE**

### **The Hearing Panel**

A panel of Hearing Officers will consist of three members and be selected by the College from a pool of trained faculty and staff.

All Hearing Officers receive annual training on the following: how to conduct a hearing; issues of relevance, including when questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant; how to serve impartially by, among other things, avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias; and other relevant issues. The Hearing Officers will also be trained on any technology that might be used during a hearing.

### ***Bias and Conflict of Interest***

The Hearing Officers must be impartial and free from bias or conflict of interest, including bias for or against a specific Complainant or Respondent or for or against complainants and respondents generally. If a Hearing Officer has concerns that they cannot conduct a fair or unbiased review, the Hearing Officer may report those concerns to the Title IX Coordinator and a different Hearing Officer will be assigned.

A Complainant and/or Respondent may challenge the participation of a Hearing Officer because of perceived conflict of interest, bias, or prejudice. Such challenges, including rationale, must be made within 48 hours of notification of the name of the Hearing Officer.

At their discretion, the Title IX Coordinator will determine whether such a conflict of interest exists and whether a Hearing Officer should be replaced. Postponement of a hearing may occur if a replacement Hearing Officer cannot be immediately identified.

### **Notice**

Both the Complainant and the Respondent will be notified in writing of the date and time of the hearing and the name of the Hearing Officers at least five business days in advance of the hearing, with the hearing to occur no fewer than ten business days after the parties are provided with the final investigative report. The Hearing Officers will receive the names of the Complainant and the Respondent at the same time.

### **Pre-Hearing Procedures and Ground Rules**

The Hearing Panel Chair and/or the Title IX Coordinator may establish pre-hearing procedures relating to issues such as scheduling, hearing structure and process, witness and advisor participation and identification, and advance determination of the relevance of certain topics. The Hearing Panel Chair will communicate with the parties prior to the hearing with respect to these issues and establish reasonable, equitable deadlines for party participation/input.

The Hearing Panel also has wide discretion over matters of decorum at the hearing, including the authority to excuse from the hearing process participants who are unwilling to observe rules of decorum.

### **Participation of Advisors**

Both parties must be accompanied by an advisor to the hearing. If a party does not have an advisor for the hearing, the College will provide an advisor of the College's choice for that party.

Each party's advisor must conduct any cross-examination of the other party and any witnesses. Apart from conducting cross-examination, the parties' advisors do not have a speaking role at the hearing; an advisors' participation is limited to conferring with the party at intervals set by the Hearing Panel.

### **Participation of Parties and Witnesses**

A party or witness who elects to participate in the process is expected, although not compelled, to participate in all aspects of the process (e.g., a witness who chooses to participate in the investigation is expected to make themselves available for a hearing if requested to do so).

If a party does not appear for the hearing, their advisor may still appear for the purpose of asking questions of the other party and witnesses. If a non-participating party's advisor also does not appear for the hearing, the College will appoint an advisor to participate in the hearing for the purpose of asking questions of the other party on behalf of the non-participating party.

Parties are reminded that, consistent with the prohibition on Retaliation, intimidation, threats of violence, and other conduct intended to cause a party or witness to not appear for a hearing are expressly prohibited.

Please see Appendix C for the August 24, 2021 letter from United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights regarding participation of parties and witnesses.

*Note: This section of the policy was amended on October 27, 2021 in response to the August 24, 2021 United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights letter regarding participation of parties and witnesses (Cardona case), per the recommendation from ATIXA and with approval of West Virginia Wesleyan College General Legal Counsel. See Appendix C for OCR reference to the Cardona case.*

### **Witnesses**

The Hearing Panel may, at their discretion, exclude witnesses or witness testimony the Hearing Panel considers irrelevant or duplicative. The Hearing Panel will explain any decision to exclude a witness or testimony as not relevant.

### **Electronic Devices and Record the Hearing**

A Respondent, Complainant, advisor, and/or witness may not bring electronic devices that capture or facilitate communication (e.g., computer, cell phone, audio/video recorder, etc.) into a hearing room, unless authorized by the Hearing Panel.

The Title IX Coordinator will arrange for there to be an audio recording and/or transcript of the hearing, which will be made available to the parties for review and kept on file by the College for seven years.

Reasonable care will be taken to create a quality recording and/or transcript and minimize technical problems, however, technical problems that result in no recording or an inaudible recording are not a valid basis for appeal.

### **Hearing Location and Use of Technology**

The hearing will be live, with all questioning conducted in real time. Upon request, the parties may be located in separate rooms (or at separate locations) with technology enabling the Hearing Panel and the parties to simultaneously see and hear the party or witness answering questions. A hearing may be conducted entirely virtually through the use of remote technology so long as the parties and Hearing Panel are able to hear and see one another in real time.

### **Hearing Structure**

The Hearing Panel has general authority and wide discretion over the conduct of the hearing. Although the Hearing Panel has discretion to modify the hearing structure, the general course of procedure for a hearing is as follows:

- Introductions;
- Respondent's statement accepting or denying responsibility;
- Opening Statement from the Complainant;
- Opening Statement from the Respondent;
- Questioning of the Complainant by the Hearing Panel;
- Questioning of the Complainant by Complainant's advisor;
- Cross-examination of the Complainant by the Respondent's advisor;
- Questioning of the Respondent by the Hearing Panel;
- Questioning of the Respondent by the Respondent's advisor;
- Cross-examination of the Respondent by the Complainant's advisor;
- Hearing Panel questioning of other witnesses (if applicable);
- Cross-examination of other witnesses by the parties' advisors;
- Closing comments from the Complainant; and,
- Closing comments from the Respondent.

A Complainant or Respondent may not question each other or other witnesses directly; they must conduct the cross-examination through their advisors. Before a party or witness answers a cross-examination or other question, the Hearing Panel will first determine whether the question is relevant. The Hearing Panel may exclude irrelevant information and/or questions. The Hearing Panel will explain any decision to exclude a question or information as not relevant.

The evidence collected as part of the investigative process will be made available at the hearing to give each party an equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.

## **VIII. DETERMINATION REGARDING RESPONSIBILITY**

Following the hearing, the Hearing Panel will consider all relevant evidence and make a determination, by preponderance of the evidence standard, whether the Respondent has violated the Policy.

A preponderance of the evidence standard means that, based on the information acquired during the investigation and the hearing, it is more likely than not the Respondent engaged in the alleged conduct.

## **Remedies and Sanctions**

In the event the Hearing Panel finds the Respondent responsible for a violation of the College's policies, appropriate remedies and sanctions will be determined by the Hearing Panel. Remedies are designed to resort or preserve equal access to the College's Education Program or Activity and may be disciplinary or punitive.

Upon a finding of responsibility, the Complainant will be provided with remedies designed to restore access to the College's educational and employment programs and activities.

Sanctions for a finding of responsibility for Student Respondents include, but are not limited to, expulsion, suspension, disciplinary probation, recommended counseling, and/or other educational sanctions. In determining (a) sanction(s), the Hearing Panel will consider whether the nature of the conduct at issue warrants removal from the College, either permanent (expulsion) or temporary (suspension). Other factors pertinent to the determination of what sanction applies include, but are not limited to, the nature of the conduct at issue, prior disciplinary history of the Respondent (shared only upon a finding of responsibility for the allegation), previous College response to similar conduct, and College interests (e.g., in providing a safe environment for all).

Sanctions for findings of responsibility for Employee and Faculty Respondents include, but are not limited to, progressive disciplinary action; prohibition from various academic or managerial responsibilities involving the Complainant or others; letter of reprimand placed in a Respondent's personnel file; restrictions on a Respondent's access to College programs or facilities; limitations on merit pay or other salary increases for a specific period; or demotion, suspension, or dismissal/termination from the College, or a recommendation that a separate process required to impose such action be commenced.

## **Written Notice Regarding Outcome and, if applicable, Sanctions/Remedies**

After a determination regarding responsibility and, if applicable, a determination regarding appropriate remedies and/or sanction has been made, the Complainant and Respondent will receive a simultaneous written notification including the decision regarding responsibility and, as applicable, remedies and sanctions. The written notification will include the following:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting Title IX Sexual Harassment;
- A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment, with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;
- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding the application of the College's code of conduct to the facts;
- A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions the College imposes on the Respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the College's Education Program or Activity will be provided by the College to the Complainant; and
- The College's procedures and permissible bases for the Complainant and Respondent to appeal.

The written notification of outcome becomes final seven business days after it is sent to the Parties, unless an appeal is filed on or before that day.

## **Withdrawal or Resignation Before Complaint Resolution**

### ***Students***

Should a student Respondent withdraw from the College, the resolution process typically ends with a dismissal, as the College has lost primary disciplinary jurisdiction over the withdrawn student. However, West Virginia Wesleyan College may continue the resolution process when, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, doing so may be necessary to address safety and/or remedy any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

Regardless of whether the complaint is dismissed or pursued to completion, West Virginia Wesleyan College will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that may have contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

The student respondent who withdraws or leaves while the process is pending may not return to the College in any capacity. Admissions and Human Resources will be notified, accordingly.

### ***Employees***

Should an employee Respondent resign with unresolved allegations pending, the resolution process typically ends with dismissal, as the College has lost primary disciplinary jurisdiction over the resigned employee. However, the College may continue the resolution process when, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, doing so may be necessary to address safety and/or remedy any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

Regardless of whether the matter is dismissed or pursued to completion of the resolution process, the College will continue to address and remedy any systemic issues or concerns that contributed to the alleged violation(s), and any ongoing effects of the alleged harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation.

The employee who resigns with unresolved allegations pending is not eligible for academic admission or rehire at the College, and the records retained by the Title IX Coordinator will reflect that status.

All responses to future inquiries regarding employment references for that individual will include that the former employee resigned during a pending disciplinary matter.

## **IX. APPEALS**

A Respondent and Complainant both have the right to appeal (1) The Title IX Coordinator's decision to dismiss a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment; and (2) the Hearing Panel's decision regarding responsibility.

A party wishing to appeal the Title IX Coordinator's decision to dismiss a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment must file a written appeal statement within five business days of the date the decision to dismiss is communicated to the parties.

A party wishing to appeal a Hearing Panel's decision must file a written appeal statement within five business days of the date the written decision is sent to the parties. Appeal statements are limited to five pages. The written appeal statement must identify the ground(s) upon which the appeal is being made.

The only grounds for appeal are:



- New information not reasonably available at the time of the decision/hearing that could affect the outcome of the matter;
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or Hearing Panel had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual Complainant or Respondent specifically that affected the outcome of the matter; and/or
- Procedural error(s) that affected the outcome of the matter.

An appeal is not a re-hearing of the case. The College may summarily deny an appeal if it is not based on one of the enumerated grounds for appeal.

### **Appellate Decision-Maker**

If the College does not summarily deny the appeal, the College will appoint an appellate decision-maker. The appellate decision-maker's role is limited to reviewing the underlying record of the investigation and hearing, the appealing party's ("Appellant") written appeal statement, any response to that statement by the other party ("Appellee"), and information presented at a meeting of the appellate decision-maker, if convened.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The College will notify the Appellant and Appellee of the name of the appellate decision-maker. The Appellant and/or Appellee may challenge the participation of an appellate decision-maker because of an actual conflict of interest, bias, or prejudice. Such challenges, including rationale, must be submitted in writing to the College no later than 48 hours after notification of the name of the appellate decision-maker. The College will determine whether such a conflict of interest exists and whether an appellate decision-maker should be replaced.

### **Response to Appeal**

The appellate decision-maker will provide written notice to the Appellee that an appeal has been submitted and will give the Appellee an opportunity to review the appeal statement. The Appellee may submit a written response to the appeal ("response"). The response is due three business days from the date the College provides written notice of the appeal to the Appellee and should be no more than five pages. The College will provide the Appellant an opportunity to review the response.

### **Written Decision**

The appellate decision-maker will provide written notification of the final decision to the Appellant and Appellee simultaneously.

The appellate decision-maker will typically notify the parties of its decision regarding an appeal in writing within five business days from receipt of the appeal statement. If the decision will take longer, the parties will be informed. The decision of the appellate decision-maker will be final and no subsequent appeals are permitted.

## **X. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The College will keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a Formal Complaint of Title IX Sexual Harassment, any Complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex

discrimination, any Respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the FERPA statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 CFR part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of 34 CFR part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or other proceeding arising thereunder.

## **XI. RECORD RETENTION**

The College shall retain for a period of seven years after the date of case closure: the official file relating to a formal resolution, including any investigation hearing, sanctioning, and/or appeals processes involving allegations of Title IX Sexual Harassment. In cases in which a Respondent was found to have violated the Policy and was expelled or terminated, the College may retain such official case files indefinitely.

*Note: This policy was drafted in response to the Final Rule on Title IX issued by the Department of Education, and was formally adopted by the College for use following August 14, 2020. The policy is updated annually. The last update was on August 1, 2021.*

## **APPENDIX A**

The following is a list of College officials designated as “Officials with Authority.” An Official with Authority, as defined in this Policy, refers to an official of the College with the authority to institute corrective action on behalf of the College, and notice to whom causes the College to respond to Title IX Sexual Harassment.

- Title IX Coordinator
- Title IX Deputy Coordinator(s)
- College President
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Development
- Dean of Students
- Director of Greek Life
- Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Director of Campus Safety and Security
- Athletic Director

## APPENDIX B

- Process B is applicable when the Title IX Coordinator determines Process A is inapplicable, or offenses subject to Process A have been dismissed.
- If Process A is applicable, Process A must be applied in lieu of Process B.

### **RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF THE POLICY ON NONDISCRIMINATION**

West Virginia Wesleyan College will act on any formal or informal allegation or notice of violation of the policy on Nondiscrimination that is received by the Title IX Coordinator or a member of the administration, faculty, or other employee, with the exception of confidential resources, as articulated in the Policy above.

The procedures described below apply to all allegations of harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation on the basis of protected class status involving students, staff, faculty members, or third parties. All other allegations of misconduct unrelated to incidents covered by this Policy will be addressed through the procedures elaborated in the respective student, faculty, and staff handbooks.

All references herein to a Title IX Coordinator also include a designee(s) of the Title IX Coordinator.

#### **I. INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

Following intake, receipt of notice, or a complaint of an alleged violation of the West Virginia Wesleyan College's nondiscrimination Policy, the Title IX Coordinator engages in an initial assessment. The steps in an initial assessment can include:

- The Title IX Coordinator reaches out to the Complainant to offer supportive measures.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to ensure they have an Advisor.
- The Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to determine which of three options to pursue: A Supportive Response, an Informal Resolution, or an Administrative Resolution.
  - If a Supportive Response is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator works with the Complainant to identify their wishes and then seeks to facilitate implementation. An Administrative Resolution process is not initiated, though the Complainant can elect to initiate it later, if desired.
  - If an Informal Resolution option is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator assesses whether the complaint is suitable for informal resolution and may seek to determine if the Respondent is also willing to engage in Informal Resolution.
  - If Administrative Resolution is preferred, the Title IX Coordinator initiates the investigation process and determines whether the scope of the investigation will address:
    - Incident, and/or
    - A potential pattern of misconduct, and/or
    - A culture/climate issue.
- Based on the initial assessment, the College will initiate one of these responses:
  - Supportive Response -- measures to help restore the Complainant's education access, as described in the Policy.

- Informal Resolution – typically used for less serious offenses and only when all parties agree to Informal Resolution, or when the Respondent is willing to accept responsibility for violating policy.
- Administrative Resolution – investigation of policy violation(s) and recommended finding, subject to a determination by a Hearing Panel and the opportunity to appeal to an Appeal Decision-maker.

The investigation and the subsequent Administrative Resolution determine whether the nondiscrimination policy has been violated. If so, the College will promptly implement effective remedies designed to end the discrimination, prevent recurrence, and address the effects.

The process followed considers the preference of the parties but is ultimately determined at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. At any point during the initial assessment or formal investigation, if the Title IX Coordinator determines that reasonable cause does not support the conclusion that policy has been violated, the process will end, and the parties will be notified.

The Complainant may request that the Title IX Coordinator review the reasonable cause determination and/or re-open the investigation. This decision lies in the sole discretion of the Title IX Coordinator, but the request is usually only granted in extraordinary circumstances.

## **II. COUNTERCLAIMS**

Counterclaims by the Respondent may be made in good faith or may instead be motivated by a retaliatory intent. The College is obligated to ensure that any process is not abused for retaliatory purposes.

The College permits the filing of counterclaims, but uses the initial assessment, described above in the Policy section, to assess whether the allegations are made in good faith. If they are, the allegations will be processed using the resolution procedures below, typically after resolution of the underlying allegation. Counterclaims made with retaliatory intent will not be permitted.

A delay in the processing of counterclaims is permitted, accordingly. Occasionally, allegations and counterclaims can be resolved through the same investigation, at the discretion of the Title IX Coordinator. When counterclaims are not made in good faith, they will be considered retaliatory, and may constitute a violation of this Policy.

## **III. ADVISORS**

Throughout the resolution process, the Complainant and a Respondent may each have an advisor of their choice to provide support and guidance. An advisor may accompany the Complainant/Respondent to any meeting with the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, or to a hearing. Further information regarding advisors is available in the above Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures.

## **IV. RESOLUTION OPTIONS**

Proceedings are private. All persons present at any time during the resolution process are expected to maintain the privacy of the proceedings. While there is an expectation of privacy around what is discussed during interviews, the parties have discretion to share their own experiences with others if they so choose, but are encouraged to discuss with their Advisors first before doing so.

### **Informal Resolution**

Informal Resolution is applicable when the parties voluntarily agree to resolve the matter through Alternative Resolution or when the Respondent accepts responsibility for violating Policy, or when the Title IX Coordinator can resolve the matter informally by providing remedies to resolve the situation.

It is not necessary to pursue Informal Resolution first in order to pursue Administrative Resolution, and any party participating in Informal Resolution can stop the process at any time and request the Administrative Resolution process. Further, if an Informal Resolution fails after the resolution is finalized, Administrative Resolution may be pursued.

### ***Alternative Resolution***

Alternative Resolution is an informal process, such as mediation or restorative practices, by which the parties mutually agree to resolve an allegation. It may be used for less serious, yet inappropriate, behaviors and is encouraged as an alternative to the Administrative Resolution process (described below) to resolve conflicts. The parties must consent to the use of Alternative Resolution.

The Title IX Coordinator determines if Alternative Resolution is appropriate, based on the willingness of the parties, the nature of the conduct at issue, and the susceptibility of the conduct to Alternative Resolution.

### ***Respondent Accepts Responsibility for Alleged Violations***

The Respondent may accept responsibility for all or part of the alleged policy violations at any point during the resolution process. If the Respondent accepts responsibility, the Title IX Coordinator makes a determination that the individual is in violation of the College's Policy.

The Title IX Coordinator then determines appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions, which are promptly implemented in order to effectively stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; prevent its recurrence; and remedy the effects of the conduct, both on the Complainant and the community.

If the Respondent accepts responsibility for all of the alleged policy violations and the Title IX Coordinator or designee has determined appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions, which are promptly implemented, the process is over. The Complainant will be informed of this outcome.

If the Respondent accepts responsibility for some of the alleged policy violations and the Title IX Coordinator has determined appropriate sanction(s) or responsive actions, which are promptly implemented for those violations, then the remaining allegations will continue to be investigated and resolved through Administrative Resolution. The parties will be informed of this outcome. The parties are still able to seek Alternative Resolution on the remaining allegations, subject to the stipulations above.

### **Administrative Resolution via an Investigation and Hearing**

Administrative Resolution can be pursued for any behavior for which the Respondent has not accepted responsibility that constitutes conduct covered by the Nondiscrimination Policy at any time during the process. Administrative Resolution starts with a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation.

If Administrative Resolution is initiated, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notification of the investigation to the parties at an appropriate time during the investigation. Typically, notice is given in

advance of an interview. Advanced notice facilitates the parties' ability to identify and choose an Advisor, if any, to accompany them to the interview.

Notification will include a meaningful summary of the allegations, will be made in writing, and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official College records, or emailed to the parties' College-issued or designated email account.

Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice will be presumptively delivered. The notification should include the policies allegedly violated, if known at the time. Alternatively, the policies allegedly violated can be provided at a later date, in writing, as the investigation progresses, and details become clearer.

Once the decision is made to commence an investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will designate an investigator(s) who will be responsible for gathering evidence directly related to the allegations.

Investigations are completed as expeditiously as possible. The College will make a good faith effort to complete the investigation as promptly as circumstances permit and will communicate regularly with the parties to update them on the progress and timing of the investigation.

All parties have a full and fair opportunity, through the investigation process, to suggest witnesses and questions, to provide evidence, and to fully review and respond to all evidence on the record.

## **V. INVESTIGATION**

The Investigators typically take the following steps, if not already completed (not necessarily in this order):

- Determine the identity and contact information of the Complainant
- In coordination with campus partners (e.g., the Title IX Coordinator), initiate or assist with any necessary supportive measures
- Identify all policies implicated by the alleged misconduct
- Assist the Title IX Coordinator with conducting an initial assessment to determine if there is reasonable cause to believe the Respondent has violated policy
- If there is insufficient evidence to support reasonable cause, the process is closed with no further action
- Commence a thorough, reliable, and impartial investigation by developing a strategic investigation plan, including a witness list, evidence list, intended investigation timeframe, and order of interviews for all parties and witnesses
- Meet with the Complainant to finalize their statement, if necessary
- Prepare the initial Notice of Investigation and Allegation (NOIA) on the basis of the initial assessment. Notice may be one step or multiple steps, depending on how the investigation unfolds, and potential policy violations may be added or dropped as more is learned. Investigators will update the NOIA accordingly and provide it to the parties.
- Notice should inform the parties of their right to have the assistance of an Advisor of their choosing present for all meetings attended by the advisee

- When formal notice is being given, it should provide the parties with a written description of the alleged violation(s), a list of all policies allegedly violated, a description of the applicable procedures, and a statement of the potential sanctions/responsive actions that could result
- Give an instruction to the parties to preserve any evidence that is directly related to the allegations
- Provide the parties and witnesses with an opportunity to review and verify the Investigator's summary notes from interviews and meetings with that specific party or witness
- Make good faith efforts to notify the parties of any meeting or interview involving the other party, in advance when possible
- Interview all relevant individuals and conduct follow-up interviews as necessary
- Allow each party the opportunity to suggest questions they wish the Investigator(s) to ask of the other party and witnesses
- Complete the investigation promptly and without unreasonable deviation from the intended timeline
- Provide regular status updates to the parties throughout the investigation
- Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, summarize for the parties the list of witnesses whose information will be used to render a finding
- Write a comprehensive investigation report fully summarizing the investigation and all evidence
- Provide the parties with a copy of the draft investigation report when it is completed, including all relevant evidence, analysis, credibility assessments, and recommended finding(s)
- Provide each party with a full and fair opportunity to respond to the report in writing within 10 business days and incorporate that response, if any, into the report
- Investigators may choose to respond in writing in the report to the responses of the parties, and/or to share the responses between the parties for their responses, while also ensuring that they do not create a never-ending feedback loop

## **VI. DETERMINATION**

Upon receiving the Investigator's report, a Panel of three Decision Makers reviews the report and all responses, and then makes the final determination on the basis of the preponderance of the evidence.

If the record is incomplete, the Panel may direct a re-opening of the investigation, or may direct or conduct any additional inquiry necessary, including informally meeting with the parties or any witnesses, if needed.

The recommendation of the investigation, if any, should be strongly considered but is not binding on the Panel. The Panel may invite and consider impact statements from the parties if and when determining appropriate sanction(s), if any.

## **VII. ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS**

### **Evidence**

Any evidence that is relevant and credible may be considered, including an individual's prior misconduct history as well as evidence indicating a pattern of misconduct, subject to the limitation below. The process should exclude irrelevant or immaterial evidence and may disregard evidence lacking in credibility or that is improperly prejudicial.



### **Sexual History/Patterns**

Unless the Panel determines it is appropriate, the investigation and the finding do not consider: (1) incidents not directly related to the possible violation, unless they evidence a pattern; (2) the irrelevant sexual history of the parties (though there may be a limited exception made with regard to the sexual history between the parties); (3) irrelevant character evidence.

### **Previous Allegations/Violations**

While previous conduct violations by the Respondent are not generally admissible as information supporting the current allegation, the Investigator(s) may supply the Panel with information about previous good faith allegations and/or findings, when that information suggests potential pattern and/or predatory conduct.

Previous disciplinary action of any kind involving the Respondent may be considered in determining the appropriate sanction(s), if the Recipient uses a progressive discipline system.

Character witnesses or evidence may be offered. The investigation and hearing will determine if the character evidence is relevant. If so, it may be considered. If not, it will be excluded.

### **Notification of Outcome**

If the Respondent admits to the violation(s), or is found in violation, the Title IX Coordinator determines sanction(s) and/or responsive actions, which are promptly implemented in order to effectively to stop the harassment, discrimination, and/or retaliation; prevent its recurrence; and remedy the effects of the discriminatory conduct, both on the Complainant and the community.

The Title IX Coordinator informs the parties of the determination of the resolution, ideally simultaneously, but without significant time delay between notifications. Notifications are made in writing and may be delivered by one or more of the following methods: in person, mailed to the local or permanent address of the parties as indicated in official College records, or emailed to the parties' College-issued or designated email account. Once mailed, emailed, and/or received in-person, notice is presumptively delivered.

The Notification of Outcome specifies the finding for each alleged policy violation, any sanction(s) that may result which the College is permitted to share pursuant to state or federal law, and the rationale supporting the findings to the extent the College is permitted to share under state or federal law.

The notice will detail when the determination is considered final. Unless based on an acceptance of violation by the Respondent, the determination may be appealed by either party. The Notification of Outcome also includes the grounds on which the parties may appeal and the steps the parties may take to request an appeal of the findings. More information about the appeal procedures can be found below.

## **VIII. SANCTIONS**

Factors considered when determining any sanction(s)/responsive action(s) may include, but are not limited to:

- The nature, severity of, and circumstances surrounding the violation
- An individual's disciplinary history
- Previous allegations or allegations involving similar conduct

- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to bring an end to the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need for sanctions/responsive actions to prevent the future recurrence of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation
- The need to remedy the effects of the discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation on the Complainant and the community
- The impact on the parties
- Any other information deemed relevant by the Title IX Coordinator/Panel

The sanction(s) will be implemented as soon as is feasible. The sanctions described in this policy are not exclusive of, and may be in addition to, other actions taken, or sanctions imposed by outside authorities. Sample sanctions are available in the above Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures.

## **IX. APPEALS**

All requests for appeal consideration will follow the procedures outlined in the above Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures.

## Appendix C



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

August 24, 2021

Dear Students, Educators, and other Stakeholders,

I write with an important update regarding the Department of Education's regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended in 2020. On July 28, 2021, a federal district court in Massachusetts issued a decision in *Victim Rights Law Center et al. v. Cardona*, No. 1:20-cv-11104, 2021 WL 3185743 (D. Mass. July 28, 2021). This case was brought by several organizations and individuals challenging the 2020 amendments to the Title IX regulations.

The court upheld most of the provisions of the 2020 amendments that the plaintiffs challenged, but it found one part of 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(6)(i) (live hearing requirement for the Title IX grievance process at postsecondary institutions only) to be arbitrary and capricious, vacated that part of the provision, and remanded it to the Department for further consideration. In a subsequent order issued on August 10, 2021, the court clarified that its decision applied nationwide. The court vacated the part of 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(6)(i) that prohibits a decision-maker from relying on statements that are not subject to cross-examination during the hearing: "If a party or witness does not submit to cross-examination at the live hearing, the decision-maker(s) must not rely on any statement of that party or witness in reaching a determination regarding responsibility...." Please note that all other provisions in the 2020 amendments, including all other parts of 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(6)(i), remain in effect. The affected provision at 34 C.F.R. § 106.45(b)(6)(i) is only applicable to postsecondary institutions and does not apply to elementary or secondary schools, which are not required to provide for a live hearing with cross-examination.

In accordance with the court's order, the Department will immediately cease enforcement of the part of § 106.45(b)(6)(i) regarding the prohibition against statements not subject to cross-examination. Postsecondary institutions are no longer subject to this portion of the provision.

In practical terms, a decision-maker at a postsecondary institution may now consider statements made by parties or witnesses that are otherwise permitted under the regulations, even if those parties or witnesses do not participate in cross-examination at the live hearing, in reaching a determination regarding responsibility in a Title IX grievance process.

For example, a decision-maker at a postsecondary institution may now consider statements made by the parties and witnesses during the investigation, emails or text exchanges between the parties leading up to the alleged sexual harassment, and statements about the alleged sexual harassment that satisfy the regulation's relevance rules, regardless of whether the parties or witnesses submit to cross-examination at the live hearing. A decision-maker at a postsecondary institution may also consider police reports, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner documents, medical reports, and other

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documents even if those documents contain statements of a party or witness who is not cross-examined at the live hearing.

The Office for Civil Rights is in the process of identifying all documents on our website that discuss this vacated provision and will make updates to those documents as appropriate in the coming weeks. Any statements in an OCR document about the vacated part of § 106.45(b)(6)(i) should not be relied upon.

As OCR announced in an April 6, 2021, letter to students, educators, and other stakeholders, OCR is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Department's existing Title IX regulations, orders, guidance, policies, and other similar agency actions to fulfill the policy set out in President Biden's Executive Order, dated March 8, 2021, on *Guaranteeing an Educational Environment Free From Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Including Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity*. This process is ongoing, and OCR anticipates publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking to amend the Department's Title IX regulations.

OCR also recently issued a question-and-answer resource to clarify how OCR interprets schools' obligations under the 2020 amendments and a related appendix, which provides examples of Title IX procedures that schools may find helpful in implementing the 2020 amendments. The resource will be updated to reflect the court's decision in *VRLC v. Cardona*, and we hope it will continue to be a valuable tool to assist schools in carrying out their obligations under Title IX.

Thank you for your efforts to ensure equal educational opportunities for all of our nation's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne B. Goldberg", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Suzanne B. Goldberg  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights