

ALUMNI COUNCIL NEWS: UPATE ON TITLE IX AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, AND A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR ALUMNI AWARD NOMINATIONS

UPATE ON TITLE IX AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

During our September meeting, the Alumni Council had several opportunities to discuss TITLE IX AND PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT with College leadership. These included a one-hour discussion with President Decatur, and a 90 minute discussion with Meredith Bonham (Vice President for Student Affairs), Samantha Hughes (Civil Rights/Title IX Coordinator), and Rebecca Leitman Veidlinger JD, External Advisor to the College.

Overall, we were impressed by the scope of ongoing activities, the degree to which the entire community is being engaged in the process, the standards to which the College is holding itself, and the clear commitment of the College's leadership to careful and transparent self-examination. The Council will continue to monitor Kenyon's plans, programs, and progress closely, and share what we learn with the larger alumni community. Here are some of the things we learned during our time on campus.

Title IX

- The [external audit](#), announced by President Decatur in May is well underway. The steering committee selected Rebecca Leitman Veidlinger JD, a lawyer and consultant who specializes in issues of campus sexual assault, to lead the audit (www.rveidlinger.com). The audit is focusing on the 2015-16 academic year, the first year of implementation of the extensively re-vamped Title IX policy. Over the summer the focus was on policy and procedure documents, and case files. At the time of our meeting Rebecca was completing a full and very busy week of on-campus information-gathering in meetings and conversations with students, faculty, staff, administration, and the Council. From all this she will submit a report providing observations and recommendations to the College, expected toward the end of current semester. The College intends to share this report with the Kenyon community, and take actions to improve and refine its current policies and processes.
- In mid-September Kenyon received notice that a Title IX investigation had been opened by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (<http://blogs.kenyon.edu/campus-report/post/kenyon-notified-of-investigation-by-united-states-department-of-education/>). The notice did not specify the allegation under investigation, but did state that "opening an allegation for investigation in no way implies that the OCR has made a determination with regard to its merits." Most of the material requested in the notice had already been assembled for the external audit, so the College was able to respond promptly. Nonetheless President Decatur noted we are likely to hear nothing for a long time. There are 275 such investigations currently open across the country, and the average investigation has been open for 18 months.
- In both meetings we were reminded that the College is legally bound to protect the privacy of both parties involved in a sexual misconduct investigation. While the College cannot provide specific information that might compromise that privacy, President Decatur did seek to dispel 2 divergent narratives he has encountered over that past six months – that no respondent has been expelled because of violations of Kenyon's sexual misconduct policies, and that all respondents have been found guilty. Neither is true.

Education and Prevention: it was gratifying to learn that much is happening. Some of the most notable highlights include the following:

- Both national data and Kenyon experience make clear that alcohol intoxication and sexual assault on college campuses are tightly correlated. This well documented fact will (and must be) be an important theme in Kenyon's education and prevention efforts going forward.
- Over the summer VP Bonham sent a letter to all parents encouraging them to discuss drinking, and its connections with sexual assault and intoxication, with their kids
- The College has implemented a new, mandatory online training module on sexual misconduct, and related issues involving alcohol and drug use. It was required of all first-year students in order to register for fall semester classes, and will be required for all sophomores /juniors /seniors prior to registration for spring semester classes. Feedback from students to date has been encouraging and supportive, and will inform subsequent versions.
- The online module also provided an opportunity to collect anonymous data on students' experiences. A high percentage of incoming students reported knowing someone who was a survivor of sexual assault.
- A number of peer-to-peer education projects – e.g. town halls, Beer & Sex – are ongoing.
- "[Sex Signals](#)", a popular, unorthodox, humor-facilitated approach to examining our culture, sex, and the core issue of bystander intervention, will be brought to campus in the fall.
- "Conversation starters" on the topic of sexual assault are being brought into athletic training.
- "[Green Dot Training](#)", another popular bystander intervention program is also being considered.
- At the time of our meeting, a total of \$1,520 had been contributed in 26 separate gifts from 21 donors to the [Kenyon Title IX Fund](#). These funds are allocated to the Title IX Coordinator's office for support of campus events, external speakers, and operational and structural needs.

Additional information is available at [Title IX News & Updates](#) and Title IX and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Policy, and [Title IX and Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\) Policy](#). In addition, the Fall 2016 edition of the Alumni Bulletin will include extensive coverage of the topic.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR ALUMNI AWARDS

Please help us identify members of the Kenyon family whose outstanding commitments to the College, or to humanitarian service, will be formally recognized during reunion weekend in May. At our February meeting we will choose this year's recipients of the following awards.

- The Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award
- The Anne J. Robinson Award
- The Humanitarian Service Award
- The Thomas B. and Mary M. Greenslade Award
- The D. Morgan Smith Award
- The Gregg Cup

Go to [Awards and Recognition](#) to submit nominations, or find additional information about the specific awards.

Let us know what's on your mind about Kenyon. You can reach us by email at alumnicouncil@kenyon.edu.