

# The Musings of a Conduct Officer

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BASICS

## Part 2: Advances because of Title IX

By smo17 On February 3, 2015 · [Add Comment](#)

I would imagine that no one in 1964 could ever imagine the long lasting affects that adding “sex” to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would have had on society or the catalyst it would serve to help fuel the women’s rights movement in general. I would further suspect that Howard Smith probably had no clue that adding just one word to a law would greatly influence how colleges and universities would interpret and enforce women’s rights 50 years later.

However one thing is certain, since Title IX was passed into law in 1972 great strides have been made in closing the gender gap on a national scale. In the report, Title IX at 40, the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education has made it clear that although Title IX has typically been looked at and referred to as a civil rights law to grant equal rights to women in education, the actual law itself was less concerned about women’s rights, but making sure that education was equal across the board. Title IX is not about privilege, but is a “gender-neutral piece of legislation designed to ensure equality in education for all students by eliminating sex-based discrimination” (NCWGE, 1).

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The report details that point of the legislation is to encourage and promote equal opportunity for all people in education and to better prepare everyone for the workforce they will enter into after college (2). Six main areas have been developed to focus on the work that Title IX has done on campus: athletics; STEM; career and technical education; sexual harassment; single-sex education; and the rights of pregnant and parenting students (2).

When it comes to athletics, the number of women playing sports in high school has increased 10-fold while the number of college women playing sports has increased six times the original number when Title IX was passed (2). The data presented in the report acknowledges that women's participation in sports has increased drastically, however there is still a gap between minority women vs Caucasian women in sports (2). The report also mentions discrepancies between funding, equipment, facilities, coaches, etc (2).

Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education has also seen major advances because of the passage of Title IX. Since Title IX, women have constantly proved that they can do everything men can do and perform at the same level. SAT scores have soared for females from 1980's to 2010 and "women now earn more than half of all bachelor's degrees in biological and social sciences" (3).

Furthermore the report notes that PhD's across all STEM fields have increased significantly from 11% in 1972 to 40% in 2006 and that women are "earning over half the PhDs in the life sciences (3).

Career and Technical education has also experienced major shifts in their constituency. Previously, men could not take home economics classes and women could not take technical related classes such as shop, car maintenance, etc. Creating opportunities where men and women can competitively obtain jobs in these technical fields ensures that the best minds are being employed instead of just those with the appropriate gender (3).

Sexual harassment is also addressed in Title IX legislation. The law applies to all programs at an institution receiving federal funds and all programs that an institution offers. According to the Title IX at 40 report, more than half of girls and 40% of boys in grades 7 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade reported being sexually assaulted during 2010-2011. These numbers are much higher in LGBTQA populations where 85% of students admit to being harassed verbally and 19% of LGBTQA students reported physical assault (4).

Single-gendered education has also sparked some debate when it comes to Title IX. Title IX advocates suggest there is no real scientific proof that separating students by gender have a great impact on student learning. The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education suggests that single-sexed educational opportunities actually promote a step backwards because “few schools meet these requirements. Many single-sex programs alleging a basis in research are in fact based on claims that amount to little more than repackaged sex stereotypes—for instance, that boys need authority and excel at abstract thinking, while girls need quiet environments that focus on cooperation and following directions”(5).

Pregnant and parenting students are also a crucial demographic for Title IX. There is very little support for students who are pregnant and need to take off during their pregnancy. “Close to half of female dropouts and one-third of male dropouts say that becoming a parent is a factor in their decision to leave high school. “Close to half of female dropouts and one-third of male dropouts say that becoming a parent is a factor in their decision to leave high school” (5).

Sexual harassment and assault is the last major focus area for Title IX enforcement. Title IX prevents sexual harassment from anyone the opposite or same sex from harassing others through in person interactions, online and or any other social media. Title IX ensures that if schools are made aware of situations of sexual harassment or assault on campus, they are required to do the following:

- 1) Take immediate action and eliminate the hostile environment;
- 2) Prevent its recurrence
- 3) Remedy the effects on the victim (20).

The Supreme Court has stood by the fact that sexual harassment/assault on college campuses hinders a student's ability to learn and therefore can be considered discrimination and falls under Title IX.

Even though many strides have been made in shrinking the gap between women's rights in education, there are still many things that need to be done to ensure educational equality for everyone.

In the next journal post, I am going to be talking about the Dear Colleague letter and how that plays into the role of Title IX and what we do in our jobs on a daily basis.

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National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE). *Title IX at 40: Working to Ensure Gender Equity in Education*. Washington, DC: NCWGE, 2012, Retrieved from <<http://ncwge.org/PDF/TitleIXat40.pdf>>..

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