

From: Cynthia Barnhart chancellor-reply@mit.edu
Subject: New Title IX regulations from the Department of Education
Date: May 8, 2020 at 7:35 PM
To: fisherp@mit.edu

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Cynthia Barnhart, Chancellor

To the MIT community:

The Department of Education (DOE) has issued [new regulations](#) governing the scope and procedures by which colleges and universities investigate and resolve complaints of sexual harassment and assault, as well as stalking and dating and domestic violence, under Title IX. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity.

As you may recall, during last year's public comment period, [MIT joined its peers in raising concerns about the draft regulations](#) and offered recommendations for improving them. Although many of those concerns still apply to the final regulations, we want to underscore again today that our top priority remains creating a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for everyone – one that does not tolerate sexual harassment and assault.

This commitment is reflected most recently in our response to the [2019 Association of American Universities campus climate survey](#), the [2018 National Academies Report on the Sexual Harassment of Women in Academia](#), and our ongoing efforts to strengthen our policies and expand education, prevention, advocacy, and support programs. Since 2014, when we began an intensive focus on campus sexual misconduct, we have made great strides, and we have no intention of losing any ground now.

Given the release of these new regulations, we are immediately conducting a review of our existing policies and procedures to ensure that they continue to promote a safe campus while complying with the requirements of the new federal rules. I am pleased

campus while complying with the requirements of the new federal rules. I am pleased to report that Professors Munther Dahleh and Andrew Whittle are co-chairing a working group of faculty, staff, and students responsible for analyzing the final regulations and assessing their impact on our current processes.

The group – which taps into expertise from across MIT and includes members from the Institute Discrimination and Harassment Response Office (IDHR), Violence Prevention and Response (VPR), the Institute Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response, Human Resources, the Division of Student Life, and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) – will make recommendations to senior leadership for implementing the new requirements in a manner that upholds the essential components of our current processes: responsiveness, impartiality, sensitivity, and care for the needs of all involved parties. Several members of the working group have been preparing for the release of the regulations for some time now so we are well positioned to conduct a review and make any required changes.

I realize that this news arrives at a moment of uncertainty for members of our community, and that the new regulations may be yet another cause for concern. Please know we will approach any changes to our current policies and processes with a great deal of care, and that we will not weaken our commitment to creating and sustaining a welcoming, safe, and inclusive living, learning, and working environment.

Please also remember that, even in this time of remote teaching, learning, and working, our support offices are here to help. For anyone in need of confidential support, please contact VPR's confidential hotline at 617-253-2300. More information about reporting an incident involving sexual harassment or assault can be found on the [IDHR website](#).

Sincerely,

Cynthia Barnhart

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Ave | Cambridge, MA 02139

This e-mail has been sent to fisherp@mit.edu.

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