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Title IX Compliance, Clery Act, VAWA, and the Department Chair

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If you think Title IX is just about equity in women's sports and if you have no idea what the Clery Act or Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) are, you are not alone. However, those at Duke, Penn State, University of Colorado, and many others can let you know there is much more to these three pieces of federal legislation than women's athletics. If you are unaware of how these three acts apply differently to distance education, you are also not alone. As a front-line supervisor, the Department Chair is often part of initial response decisions regarding compliance which can have multi-million-dollar ramifications.

Unfortunately, many Department Chairs, especially those with limited experience, often do not fully grasp the role of compliance in their daily work until they unexpectedly receive a complaint or are thrust into the process by the Dean/Compliance Office. Understanding the importance of University policy, setting the correct tone regarding compliance within your department, and making the right decisions in reporting is a fundamental part of the Department Chair's daily efforts. Maintaining an in-depth appreciation of compliance policy and processes will assist the chair and the University to meet their obligations under federal law and help manage uncomfortable situations.

This scenario based workshop will begin with a review of Title IX, the Clery Act, and VAWA. It will then transition to scenarios where participants will be expected to share experiences to introduce best practices and pitfalls to avoid. The workshop will leverage legal opinions and research findings regarding what Compliance Officers want Chairs to know. The human aspects of these difficult situations will also be highlighted.

Understanding of expectations for events which occur outside of the institution's geographic location is a new field for distance education administrators and instructors. An exploration of emerging case law and legal opinions will start this section of the workshop. The workshop will then review the findings of an email survey of compliance officers from 30 public and private institutions which offer distance education. From documented discussion boards to virtual campuses, the online-hybrid arena poses new demands on institutions to expand Title IX, Clery Act, and VAWA procedures to the distance education world. Findings from the survey will be addressed on topics such as, what compliance officers think should be done when a student reports domestic issues or abuse "off campus," what is onerous, and who pays for distance services? What are the institution's geographic boundaries as defined by the three pieces of legislation when institutional endeavors are occurring in a 24/7 global environment?

From this session chairs will increase their awareness of how to reduce Title IX, Clery Act, and VAWA issues by working with their staff and faculty to create an environment which will encourage proper actions, responses, reporting, and expectations. Additionally, a review of how Title IX, Clery Act, and VAWA are different in distance education will be covered. Participants will be encouraged to exchange ideas, ask questions, and share case studies.