

U.S. Department of Energy

**Office of Civil Rights and Diversity
Civil Rights Division**

*Publication on
Title IX Promising Practices*



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ENERGY**

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I. Background

The Department of Energy (the Department or DOE) provides financial assistance to educational institutions and is a major Federal funding agency for basic research and development programs in the sciences at institutions of higher learning. The DOE supports a diverse portfolio of research at colleges, universities, and research institutions across the United States, providing funding to more than 300 such institutions every year. The funding provided by DOE supports thousands of principal investigators, graduate students, and post-doctoral researchers.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), as amended, 20 U.S.C. Section 1681, *et. Seq.*, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance.

In July 2004, the General Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report (GAO Report Number 04-639) that addressed the compliance activities of the four Federal science agencies (DOE, Department of Education, National Science Foundation, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The GAO found that the agencies had taken significant steps to ensure that the institutions that received financial assistance were in compliance with Title IX. However, the GAO also found that women were not fully represented in those institutions. As a result, the GAO recommended that the science agencies conduct post-award monitoring to ensure that women are allowed full opportunity to participate in university science programs, and that sex discrimination does not prevent women from pursuing science degrees.

The America COMPETES Act, Pub. L. No. 110-69, 121 Stat. 573 (2007), first passed in 2007 and reauthorized in 2011, provided additional impetus for conducting compliance reviews. The Act directed the Secretary of Energy to report to Congressional energy committees on the actions that were taken by the Department to implement the recommendations in the GAO report. The Act also required the Department to conduct at least two compliance reviews annually of institutions to which it provides funding.

DOE has promulgated regulations at 10 C.F.R. Parts 1040 and 1042 for implementing Title IX. Pursuant to these regulations and the America COMPETES Act, DOE conducts at least two compliance reviews per fiscal year of higher educational institutions to ensure that they are in compliance with Title IX.

The DOE Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, Civil Rights Division (OCR), an organization within the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, carries out the enforcement of DOE's Title IX regulations, including the required annual Title IX compliance reviews.

II. Scope of DOE Title IX Compliance Reviews

DOE Title IX compliance reviews evaluate and assess many aspects of a selected university's program(s) that has received DOE funding, including policies and practices related to student recruitment, admissions, financial assistance, research and teaching assistantships, graduation rates, and time to degree completion. In addition, reviews include an evaluation of campus climate, family friendly policies, campus safety, and Title IX training and complaint processing, among other areas.

A compliance review generally consists of both a request for relevant records and data, as well as an on-site visit in which faculty, staff, and students are interviewed by members of the DOE Title IX Compliance Review Team. Following the conclusion of the compliance review and an evaluation of the records and data provided by a university, the Department issues a comprehensive report to the institution identifying whether the institution is in compliance with Title IX. The Title IX Compliance Review Report also identifies recommendations when the Department finds that there are areas for improving and strengthening compliance with Title IX, as well as promising practices when DOE finds that an institution has implemented a practice that supports and enhances its compliance with Title IX. The Title IX Compliance Review reports are published on the DOE OCR website.

III. Identification of Title IX Promising Practices

The Department has completed twenty eight Title IX compliance reviews since it initiated Title IX compliance reviews in 2005. The DOE Title IX promising practices identified below are derived from the Title IX compliance review reports issued by the Department to date. They are organized into the following five categories:

1. Outreach and Recruitment
2. Campus Climate and Resources
3. Family Friendly Practices
4. Campus Safety Practices
5. Policies, Training and Complaint Procedures

1. Outreach and Recruitment Promising Practices

Overview:

The outreach and recruitment promising practices have many variations and innovations. Some of these practices are common to most university grantees, such as open houses, visiting weekends, spend a day on campus, summer programs, recruitment fairs, conferences, and the use of databases. Others are uniquely developed by universities and institutions reflecting a narrower focus or target. Within these categories, there are differences with respect to university offerings, stipends, on-campus research, or other benefits.

Visiting Weekends

Visiting weekends for applicants are a common tool used by graduate programs to expose the prospective student to the university and department to which they have applied. It provides an opportunity for prospective students to meet and socialize with faculty and other students, participate in information sessions about the department, and tour the campus and laboratory facilities. At one institution, faculty members follow up with prospective students who attended the visiting weekend throughout the academic year.

Undergraduate Summer Research Programs

Many universities utilize summer research programs for undergraduate students as a recruitment technique. These programs bring students interested in graduate research programs to campuses, so that they can gain exposure to the programs by engaging in undergraduate research.

- One University funds a summer undergraduate research program specifically to recruit students who are underrepresented, providing minorities and women the opportunity to work with a faculty member as a research assistant in a laboratory or to edit or write a research paper. Participation in the program is full-time at 40 hours per week, and the summer student is expected to present a scientific paper and make an oral presentation at the end of the program.
- Another form of summer program is to host Summer Camps to expose students to a particular field of study. One university hosts a summer program for those seeking an engineering degree, which has workshops where they learn about engineering as a major. Approximately 300 to 400 students participate in these Summer Camps. This college also has a “Spend A Day” event every spring for prospective students to visit campus to familiarize themselves with the engineering department and to meet faculty.

Hosting a University Open House

Open houses are another technique for faculty to meet prospective students to explain the curriculum, the research opportunities, and career goals. Many universities hold open houses with a variety of different elements, as detailed by the examples below.

- One university holds an open house to target rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have expressed an interest in seeking an engineering degree. The faculty and staff provide facility tours and introduce students to faculty members who can provide more detailed information.
- Another university holds an annual open house to recruit for its graduate school and the recruitment committee analyzes the applications of the best students who attend these open houses. These students attend the physics colloquium, as well as classes, and, in the evening, participate in information sessions with light fare to meet with various members of the physics department. They are given lab tours and meet with

individual faculty members. Later in the open house, they are given the opportunity to have dinner with faculty and to have more individualized meetings and lab visits.

- Recruitment information sessions are held three times a week at one university for prospective students and their parents. These sessions provide an overview of engineering majors and the admissions requirements for engineering programs and available scholarships.

Recruitment Fairs and Conferences

Several universities attend various recruitment fairs and conferences to recruit students. Many hosts and sponsors of these fairs are minority group organizations and women's organizations. These universities send staff and faculty to attend these fairs and conferences to identify students who are interested in pursuing careers in STEM fields and follow up with those who are qualified and interested in a particular STEM field. Other conferences are held by different professional associations. Here, the interested students can network and hear from a diverse group of professionals, women, and minorities in these particular STEM fields.

Listings and Databases

Several schools utilize various databases to identify and target students that might be interested in their graduate programs. These databases include the following:

- **American Institute of Physics (AIP) graduate program listing.** The AIP publishes a list of candidates who are interested in graduate programs. University graduate programs can review all of the students who are interested in graduate education and recruit them from the AIP listing.
- **ENGINE Database** includes a wide variety of disciplines, and it helps to identify and advance the recruitment of underrepresented minority and female students. From the inception of the use of the Database at this institution to the time of DOE's Title IX compliance review at the institution, the total number of female applicants to the graduate engineering program had increased by approximately 27%. Further, the program had increased the total number of female applicants to its PhD program by 26%. This more than doubled the number of females in its PhD program during that time period.
- **Western Name Exchange Program (WNEP).** This university participates in the Western Name Exchange Program, which is a large database that identifies a large pool of qualified applicants to graduate programs. The chair of the admissions committee contacts interested students and follows up by finding out their interest in a particular field.
- **Digital Distribution.** At one University, once a prospective student is identified they are sent a digital device, which contains all of the information necessary for qualifying, gaining admission, and obtaining fellowships, financial aid, and housing on campus.

Engaging University Students and Staff in Targeted Recruitment Efforts

Universities utilize existing students, staff, and faculty members to participate in recruitment efforts. Examples include:

- **Ambassadors.** One university has an Ambassadors program for engineering. This outreach program consists of graduate students, half of whom are women, who work to recruit potential students. The department also recognizes the success of the NSF ADVANCE program to increase the number of women faculty in STEM fields.
- **EXCEL Program.** One University has a program called EXCEL, which is aimed at prospective graduate students. The program utilizes academic advisors to explain to prospective students that there will be paid research at the university and to encourage prospective students to seek a graduate degree. This department of engineering also has an incoming student database which provides faculty members the opportunity to electronically review the credentials of prospective students and to encourage them to apply for admission.
- **Advisors.** Other universities sponsor and provide advisors to guide female students during their attendance in the engineering program. These advisors are dedicated to serving as a resource for students while they undertake the rigorous engineering curriculum. The goal is to improve retention of female students in an engineering program.
- **National Science Foundation (NSF) CURRENT.** NSF sponsors the research center, CURRENT, which engages in outreach to schools in the region to provide research experience for undergraduates.
- **Director of Graduate Student Recruitment.** Another university established the position of director of graduate student recruitment to oversee outreach and recruitment for the college of engineering. This director has engaged in a number of recruitment and outreach activities, including the creation of a database for prospective engineering students. This director has established a website and brochure for off-campus and out-of-state recruitment. This director uses information from the GEM national consortium of fellowships database to explore the number of private scholarships available for underrepresented minority students and female students interested in pursuing engineering graduate degrees or degrees in other STEM fields. This university also uses a national engineering honors fraternity scholarship program and the Ronald E. McNair national scholarship pool for recruitment.

Participating in the NSF ADVANCE Program.

The main goal of the NSF ADVANCE program is to promote and sustain institutional change at all levels, resulting in the full participation of women and minority faculty members at the university. The program is administered in the Provost's office under the

Associate Provost. The Associate Provost works with all of the deans of the different departments, senior administrators, and college equity advisors to institutionalize positive change in the university's policies, practices, and structures. College equity advisors work with the respective deans and diversity committees to improve and implement the best practices and policies to help faculty members who are females succeed in moving through professorial ranks.

Utilizing Fellowships as a Recruitment Tool.

Universities fund and utilize targeted fellowships to diversify their graduate student body. Fellowships are designed to attract talented students who will broaden the diversity of those pursuing PhD degrees at one university. Diversity may vary by discipline, but might include ethnicity, gender, cultural background, and/or other life experiences as a criterion, among other criteria.

2. Campus Climate and Resources Promising Practices

Overview:

These practices are more amorphous than those of outreach and recruitment activities and less capable of being quantified. Nonetheless, these practices provide a more supportive climate for students while they pursue a career in a STEM field. These practices can be lumped into two major categories: on-campus resources provided by the university and student organizations; and, off-campus organizations collaborating with the university and on-campus student organizations. Examples Include:

- **Women's Research Center.** One exemplary practice is an on-campus Women's Research Center that serves as a locus and a nexus for women to find services and resources to help them succeed in pursuit of a career in a STEM field. This Center was established at one university to conduct activities related to the advancement of women on campus. Recent activities of the center include a campus quality of life survey, a presentation on student-to-student sexual harassment, and efforts to enhance the research capacity of women faculty members at the university. The Center strives to support women through educational programs, mentoring, and leadership development. The Center's motto embraces all of the singular practices, and reads: "*Create a safe space for women to explore, learn, and reach their maximum potential in a more equitable society.*"
- **Qualifying Exam Prep Course.** The qualifying examination preparation course implemented at this institution has the potential to improve the retention rate of female graduate physics students, as the first-time pass rates on the qualifying examination had been historically lower for females than the first-time pass rates for males. This helps retain women in the graduate physics programs at the university.

- **Women in Physics Month.** The Women in Physics Month exposes graduate students to female academics and fosters a sense of community and networking among faculty members and female graduate students. This exposure of graduate physics students to female academics has the effect of reducing gender stereotypes.
- **Women in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (WEECS).** WEECS is a student organization whose mission is to foster success of women by recruiting female students and encouraging them to pursue degrees in the field of computer science, computer engineering, and/or electrical engineering. It organizes a variety of activities throughout the year, many of which are sponsored by the university. Students praise the director of electrical engineering and computer science for his support of the organization. Many of the female students interviewed during the compliance review said that they are members of WEECS. The university provides funding to the organization for students to attend conferences and for inviting female speakers to campus.
- **Colloquia Speakers.** Several universities collaborate with Women in Science and Engineering (WISE), Women in Computer Science (WICS), and Society of Women Engineers (SWE) to invite women leaders in the field to speak on topics of current interest. Faculty and students are invited to attend. A female professor who coordinates the program at an institution invited three female speakers during an academic year. At another university, colloquia sessions are held that focus on a range of topics and serve as a means for students to stay informed about current developments in the field of computer science and electrical engineering. A female professor is the coordinator of this university program, and with other professors, recommends speakers. They strive to have female speakers each semester.
- **Outside Organizations Which Support and Enhance Opportunities.** Several institutions have Women in Science and Engineering, Women in Computer Science, Society of Women Engineers, and/or similar student organizations. These organizations aim to promote gender equity in the sciences at the university.
- **Handbook for Teaching Assistants.** One institution provides comprehensive training for teaching assistants, which includes information on Title IX, and the Handbook provided to Teaching Assistants addresses Title IX and focuses on improving classroom climate in science and engineering. These practices create awareness of the need to comply with Title IX regulations.

3. Family Friendly Promising Practices

Overview:

Most university grantees that DOE has reviewed have variations of the following practices: maternity/paternity/adoption leave, family leave, child care, family and lactation rooms, and supportive dual career practices. Duration, compensation, and subsidies cover the gamut within these practices.

- **On-Campus Childcare.** The age brackets for on-campus childcare services have varied among institutions and have ranged from infancy to 12 years of age. Most students, staff, and faculty who have been interviewed during compliance reviews, have been aware of childcare options. Some universities will provide some form of subsidy, and some subsidies, for example, have ranged from a full cost subsidy to 25% of one's salary for staff, including teaching assistants and/or research assistants.
- **Off-Campus Childcare Services.** At institutions where this is available, these services are offered on a sliding scale in terms of the cost for childcare. To qualify, most universities require a minimum number of academic hours to be carried by one or both parents.
- **Maternity/Paternity Leave and Adoption.** Most of the universities have a clear statement of maternity and paternity leave. Some institutions will grant leave only for the mother, while others allow for a father or a partner, as well as the birthing mother, to take leave to care for a child. The duration of maternity/paternity leave varies from six weeks to six months at some institutions, and some universities allow a month prior to the birth for the mother to prepare for the birth of a child.
- **Family Leave to Care for a Relative.** This is another aspect of a family friendly policy. This will allow a student, staff, or faculty member to take leave to care for a relative who may be ill, or to care for a relative who requires an intense level of care for certain durations. Again, the duration will vary from a couple of weeks to months, depending on the circumstances of the person who needs the care. Whether this is paid or unpaid leave is, again, dependent on the circumstances.
- **Adoption.** Adoption is also an area for which institutions have established maternity/paternity or family leave policies. It appears that many of the institutions we have reviewed wish to retain their talented graduate students in STEM fields and are willing to make accommodations so that students can have a family and continue their studies and work toward graduation and a career.
- **Dual Career Hiring and Stop the Clock Program.** The university dual career hiring program and *Stop the Clock* policy enable the university to retain talent. The dual career hiring program, also known as the *Career Partners Program*, is a faculty recruitment tool that allows academic partners to be hired as an incentive for coming to work. The Stop the Clock for Child Care policy allows an academic

appointee to stop the clock to care for any child who is, or becomes, part of a faculty member's family. These respective policies and programs address traditionally gender-related barriers and demonstrate the university's commitment to the recruitment, promotion, and retention of female faculty.

4. Campus Safety Promising Practices

Overview:

The Department recognizes that campus safety is important to students, faculty, and staff, and that some students may be required to work in labs late at night. As a result, the Department has incorporated campus safety in its Title IX compliance reviews. All institutions we have reviewed provide some element of campus safety and safety education, such as: awareness alerts about crime, blue light kiosks, safe escorts, shuttle bus services (on-campus and off-campus), self-defense courses, and/or victim services, which may include temporary shelter and/or medical care. University grantees should emulate all of these practices to provide women on campus with a safe place to live and learn.

Two universities had comprehensive campus safety programs. These programs contain many elements and programs that other universities have only in singular fashion. These programs listed below encompass an array of the different types of promising campus safety policies and practices.

- **Awareness.** One of the universities has a “*Think Safe*” publication distributed university-wide. The publication contains a compilation of crime and safety data. It is available in paper and electronic form and is mailed in hard copy to all university faculty, staff, and students each year. Approximately 40,000 copies are distributed annually. The “*Think Safe*” publication also includes information about sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and grievance procedures.
- **Blue Light Kiosks.** Many universities utilize emergency phones which are located near walkways and on or near parking lots. Once the button on the phone is activated, a blue light begins to flash. An officer will then be dispatched to the location to offer assistance. Most students and professors who were interviewed as part of a compliance review identified this service as an important safety feature. The importance of the blue light emergency phone is that an individual can dial from within the university phone system, which gives the exact location of the individual to the operator.
- **Safe Escorts.** Universities utilize escorts and patrol services, which are usually under the control of the campus police department. The purpose of such escorts is to provide a free, safe passage for students, staff, and faculty who need to walk or bike the main campus after dark.
- **Shuttle Bus Service.** Many universities provide a shuttle bus service for students in the evening hours to transport students at residential halls, providing transportation to and from the main campus. The campus destination points are

selected to allow students a short distance to travel to classrooms or campus activities or laboratories.

- **Crime Alerts.** The University police at some institutions send crime alerts to students, faculty, and staff by email or text. In addition, the campus police publish bulletins alerting students and university personnel of any criminal activity on or near the campus.
- **Self-Defense Courses.** The campus police at this institution provide self-defense courses to women under a program called Self-Defense Awareness and Familiarization Exchange (SAFE). The registration fee is five dollars. Instructors are university police officers who have been trained by the National Self-Defense Institute. The courses are designed to provide attendees with information, tactics, and options that may be useful for defending against various types of crimes.
- **Ride Home Services.** Another University provides ride home services. This is available to all university students. This program has a pre-purchase ticket plan with the tickets sold at parking offices and through the university administration. Each \$2 ticket covers transportation within a 2-mile radius of the University and is available any time, day or night, seven days a week. If the ride is more than 10 miles in distance, the rider is responsible for the difference in fare.
- **Victim's Services.** At another university, the university police host special events to promote prevention awareness. Students may receive services after they have been victimized. Training programs for members of the community are also offered. These services are free for victims or survivors of a crime and provide support and information about options that are available to them. Victims are informed of reporting options, and are provided immediate safety and security, emergency shelter, and nonemergency medical services. The goal of these services is to prevent campus crime.

Victim's services include: crisis intervention, emotional support, practical assistance, criminal justice, and administrative support and appropriate referrals to on-and-off campus agencies and resources. The phone number and a description of the services provided for victims are displayed prominently behind restroom doors and throughout the engineering complex. This makes many students aware of how they can protect themselves, get help, and proceed with a claim, if they wish to do so.

- **The Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP).** This is a free, nightly safety and transportation service offered by one university. The staff is comprised of students who have undergone background checks and a driving test. The staff are equipped with police radios and their communications are monitored by the campus police department. The service is available from 6:30 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. nightly during the fall and spring, and from 8:30 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. during the summer. Students may request the service by calling or using the services smart phone app.

5. Title IX Policies, Training, and Complaint Procedures

Overview:

The following practices aim to ensure that a University has a comprehensive Title IX program that educates students, staff, and faculty on the requirements of Title IX. Additionally, universities institute policies and practices lessen the stigma on students that avail themselves of Title IX protections. These practices include online filing, victim and witness confidentiality, alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation and use of an Ombudsman's office.

Increasing Awareness of Title IX and Prohibitions on Sexual Harassment.

Ensuring that the entire university has an understanding of Title IX and the related prohibitions against sexual harassment is a fundamental requirement of Title IX. Below are examples of actions taken by specific universities toward this goal:

- **Published Statements.** Institutions publish a statement in various forms (email; campus newspaper; and other forms) that includes the prohibition of Title IX, including the prohibition of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault and violence, as well as definitions for such prohibited conduct. One institution included in its statement the availability of bystander training, as well as employee obligations to address/report such conduct.
- **Sexual Harassment Policy.** One university has implemented regulations against sexual harassment. It has created an awareness program which has procedures and practices for discouraging sexual harassment and for processing complaints of sexual harassment. All complaints of sexual harassment must be reported by the supervisor or department head to the ombudsman for resolution. Faculty and staff members who fail to report complaints, or who fail to cooperate in the complaint processing of sexual harassment, are subject to disciplinary action by the supervisor or the administrative head of the department.
- **Training.** Training is a fundamental component of Title IX awareness and prevention. Examples of training undertaken at universities include:
 - **Title IX and/or Harassment Prevention Training for faculty and staff.** Many universities mandate that training be given to all faculty and staff members at orientation and/or during the onboarding process. At one institution, faculty and staff are required to attend prevention and response training within six weeks after being hired, while another university requires that such training be completed within thirty days of hire.

One university will withhold health benefits for any faculty member or staff member who does not attend the training. At another university, new employees must complete the training within the prescribed time, or risk being locked out of their employee account.

One institution maintains an 18-month cycle for recurring training professors and administrators. The director of human resources (HR) is responsible for disseminating information about Title IX training and for conducting the training.

At another institution, all faculty and staff supervisors are provided two hours of prevention and response training every two years. Each year all faculty and staff are provided with reminders from the Chancellor and the Title IX Coordinator about the university's commitment to the prevention of and required response to discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence.

- **Incoming Student Orientation and Training for Students.** Undergraduates and graduates are required to complete online prevention and response training upon their enrollment and orientation at the university. All students are provided prevention and response education as part of their orientation. Each year all students are provided with reminders from the Chancellor and the Title IX Coordinator about the university's commitment to prevention and to responding to allegations of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence.

One institution requires transfer students to attend a transfer student orientation, during which time Title IX is addressed.

At one university, students are required to take online training on sexual harassment, sexual violence, and sexual assault, and a student's registration is placed on hold if the student does not take the mandatory training. In addition, the summer orientation program for students at this institution includes several presentations on Title IX, bystander intervention, sexual violence, and victim advocacy.

- **Preventive Measures.** This university publishes a pamphlet entitled *Stop Sexual Harassment*. The pamphlet gives a clear definition of sexual harassment, provides examples of inappropriate behavior, and offers suggestions for discouraging such inappropriate behavior. The pamphlet also contains information for filing a formal complaint or informal complaint of sexual harassment.
- **State Board of Education Regents Regulation.** One state's University Board of Regents has a policy that requires all employees to receive training on sexual harassment at the campus and procedures for responding to sexual harassment. Each university within the system must have online training programs for this purpose. Current employees at these institutions must have completed the training within thirty days, while new employees will be required to complete the training within forty-five days of being hired.

- **Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures.** At one university, all employees or students alleging sexual harassment may report the harassment or file a complaint. Allegations of sexual harassment must be made in good faith. The complainant shall determine which procedure shall be used to address the allegation. Time frames identified in the procedures may be extended for good cause, such as when classes are not in session, or by mutual agreement of the parties to the report or complaint.
- **Websites and Online Filing Form.** One university's website provides comprehensive information, which describes the complaint process, indicates where the complaint may be filed, and provides links to an intake form, as well as to the external agencies to which complaints may be filed. The intake form includes a confidentiality statement on the bottom of the second page, where the complainant signature is required.
- **Confidentiality.** One university's confidentiality statement states: The university shall protect the identity and confidentiality of the complainant and statements made by the parties and witnesses involved in a sexual harassment report or complaint to the extent permitted by law and to the extent that continued protection does not interfere with the university's ability to investigate allegations of misconduct. Another university's office of equal opportunity makes every effort to maintain confidentiality except in situations where law, university policy, or the investigatory process requires the release of information.
- **Retaliation.** Some institutions well publicize that retaliation against any individual who files a complaint and/or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.
- **Mediation.** At one university, individuals who believe that they have been discriminated against may choose to resolve their complaint through mediation. Mediation suspends the complaint process for up to thirty working days. By mutual agreement, the parties may elect to have their concerns mediated by the mediation clinic at the university law school, rather than through the university EEO office. A mediated agreement is final, and cannot be appealed. The Associate Provost or either party may at any time prior to the expiration of thirty working days declare that attempts at mediation have failed. Upon such notice, the Associate Provost may proceed to an investigation.
- **Ombudsman Office.** Several universities have an ombudsman as a resource and have a visible ombudsman office. The ombudsman assists with complaints of sex discrimination and sexual harassment only at the informal level. The ombudsman serves as a neutral third-party and does not advocate for the university or for the complainant to a dispute. The ombudsman engages the parties in mediation and conciliation and provides information, advice, and recommendations on how to move forward with a complaint and resolution of the issues. The objective is to provide a process for achieving a fair and reasonable settlement. Complainants are

actively involved in the resolution process with the ombudsman and other parties and witnesses. They are asked to participate in preparing a plan that addresses their specific concerns. Resolution plans are developed in conjunction with staff of the ombudsman office.