

Response to the Daily Nebraskan April 15 article on Title IX

I was deeply concerned and disappointed after reading the April 15 *Daily Nebraskan* story which was presented as an investigation of UNL's Title IX office.

It is always concerning to me when students raise questions about the services provided on our campus, or feel they have been treated poorly. This is particularly true in instances where students have experienced sexual violence, harassment or concerns about campus safety.

However, this particular article left out many important elements in UNL's efforts, particularly the steps taken in the summer of 2018 to improve our support for victims of sexual violence. Following best practices at other institutions of higher education, and nearly all other Big Ten institutions, we decided to hire full-time staff to specifically support and advocate for victims. We now have trained, expert advocates – with deep experience in working with victims of sexual violence. These advocates are able to dedicate more than 80 hours per week to victim advocacy, which is a marked improvement over the part-time support of 10 hours per week that had previously been available. We also created a new Advocacy and Support Office, located in the University Health Center, which provides a confidential contact for survivors of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, or domestic abuse. These efforts were undertaken with the best interests of our students in mind, and we are not going back on our commitment of dedicated UNL support.

Ensuring the university's compliance with Title IX is a complex and difficult task. I have confidence in our Title IX office to properly investigate these complaints in a manner that ensures due process for all involved. Just as I have confidence in our professional victims' advocates, and our CAPS office and other mental health resources to provide support.

We provide a full array of resources on campus, and there are also many organizations in Lincoln that can provide additional support for victims. This multi-layered approach can help ensure students are able to utilize whatever resources best meet their needs.

Over the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18, UNL had 253 Title IX complaints. Our services are here to support anyone who needs them, and we want students to feel free to come forward and report these instances so they can receive support from victims' advocates and, if they choose, to initiate a Title IX or legal investigation.

The student stories told to the *Daily Nebraskan* were painful, and I wish no student had this experience. I am very concerned, however, that in highlighting the concerns raised by these five students – without clearly differentiating the role of the Title IX office compared to the role of the victims' advocate, or noting the new resources available since these students had their experiences – that this article may result in many other students choosing to not come forward and get the support they need. I do not believe anyone would want that outcome, and that is why I wish a more balanced report had been provided in the April 15 *Daily Nebraskan* story.

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