

Year 1 Public Description of Work for  
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Miami

Creation of the

**Guidance for Pregnant and Parenting Students Resource**  
Document

**This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):**

15- Improved Communication and Increased Transparency

9-Other efforts to address or prevent sexual harassment

10-Improved Policies

**Description of Work:**

Purpose

The University of Miami is committed to creating an environment free from all types of sex-based and gender-based discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of pregnancy. In furtherance of this commitment, the Title IX Office recently led an effort to consolidate information and resources for pregnant and parenting students into a single guide (‘Guidance for Pregnant and Parenting Students’) for reference by students and administrators, and which is publicly available to University community members at [www.miami.edu/titleix](http://www.miami.edu/titleix).

The goal in generating the ‘Guidance for Pregnant and Parenting Students’ was to have information more readily available for reference by students, and administrators assisting students, as a means to increasing access and ensure consistent response to pregnant and parenting students throughout the University. This information in the guidance document is intended not to simply meet the University’s legal obligations but to provide other information that could be helpful as students plan through pregnancy and parenthood.

Methodology

In order to generate the document, a working group was formed consisting of representatives from the main student support areas, as well as General Counsel. For our institution, the working group consisted of representatives from: The Title IX Office, Dean of Students Office, Graduate School Dean of Students Office, Medical School Dean of Students Office, Law School Dean of Students Office, and General Counsel. This group met three separate times. First, the group shared and researched issues affecting pregnant and parenting students in the different schools in order to identify trends and concerns of universal

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applicability; from that, they narrowed down the topics that should be covered by the guidance document; last, the group compiled the guidance document for publication.

Throughout this process, the working group consulted with several campus partners to obtain information specific to areas that could provide important information that should be included in the document. For example, the final document includes information about special on-campus parking arrangements that pregnant students can request; information about medical coverage for students and their children; and information about on-campus daycare options. For each of these, the working group reached out to the specialized campus partners to collect the information and include in the guidance document.

### Program/ School Specific Challenges

A challenge that was identified in the early conversation of the working group was that some issues affecting pregnant and parenting students, particularly requests for special academic arrangements, would be highly dependent on the specifics of the student's program and curriculum. As such, it was decided that there should be one person identified as the point-person for each student constituency (undergraduate students, graduate students, medical students, law students). This would ensure that instead of individually reaching out to faculty who may or may not be familiar with the University's obligations and resources, students would be able to find a person who is knowledgeable of these and be able to walk the student through options depending on their specific program and needs.

### University-wide Resources

A highlight of this process was the ability to bring to the forefront some resources designed to increase access with which individuals might not be familiar. For example, information about special on-campus parking arrangements that pregnant students can request; information about medical coverage for students and their children; and information about on-campus daycare options. The guidance document also links directly to the Nursing Room Request Form, which is a centralized system to ensure nursing mothers with the spaces and privacy they need if they are still nursing upon returning to class.

### Final Product Availability & Distribution

Upon completion of the guidance document by the working group, the document was shared with University Leadership for review and an opportunity to comment. The document was then made available on the University's Title IX website. Having the document publicly available on the website was important so that students could access it by searching the site without having to go through a staff or faculty member to find it.

In addition, the document was shared with the University's TIX Committee Members, and with the President's Coalition for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Education. Members

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of each of these groups were given discretion to share the document widely amongst faculty in their schools and circles, as well as with students.

### Highlights and Next Steps

An important highlight of this work was that there were no new processes or resources that had to be created; instead, the process focused on highlighting existing resources which were already available but information about which was not as readily accessible to students before. Another highlight is that even in the few months we have had this document, we have already found this is a great resource not only for students but also for faculty who are often a first point of contact for pregnant students and can now share this document rather than trying to navigate a student concern or request on their own.

Looking forward, a continued issue to explore is the extent to which accommodations should be granted for pregnant and parenting students to engage in their educational program in non-traditional ways. On this, COVID-19 has pushed the University in many ways to re-imagine their programs and some of these innovations could be applicable to increase access for parenting and pregnant students. While this will continue in many ways to be a program-specific issue, it is a matter that the working group flagged for review by each school within the University.

**Website for further information (if applicable):** [www.miami.edu/titleix](http://www.miami.edu/titleix)

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