

Reporting Rape When You're Not a Student

This is my second column in a series for *WIHE* on campus sexual assault. Last month, I started the series by covering how [some campuses](#) are attempting to address safety by preventing the admission or transfer of students with histories of sexual or relationship violence.

This column was *supposed* to be about what to do when you are a professor or otherwise employed in higher education and you are raped, stalked or harmed in a way that would come under the aegis of your campus's Title IX office. What do you do? What are your choices? Whom can you go to for help? I wanted to answer this question for you all, my readers, because it is close to my heart. But I found the answer so hard to come by that the *search* for the answer has become the heart of this column.

Reporting as a Former Student

First, let me tell you a little bit about my story. I was raped in graduate school by another graduate student. [I've written about this experience before](#). I didn't report it at the time; in fact, I've also written about [why I chose not to report being raped](#). But then, years later, for reasons you can read about in [other pieces I've written](#), I chose to report being raped to my institution.

Ironically, when I finally decided to report being raped to my institution's Title IX office, I'd been hired as a professor at the very institution where I needed to make my report—where I'd been raped so many years before.

At the time (it's been a few years now), I figured reporting wouldn't be a big deal. After all, I was a professor. I was a grown-up. I had a doctorate *and* a law degree. I was a person with a lot of institutional power, and I thought those things would protect me. I was very, very wrong. Even though I was a professor, a doctor-lawyer, a person with institutional power, the process of reporting a years'-old rape to the Title IX office at my institution [was nothing short of harrowing](#).

What Resources Exist for Employees?

So now I want to do what I can to help others employed in higher education who have to go through similar experiences. And I realize that, despite all my own experience in this area, I don't know enough about what resources exist for *employees* in higher ed. When I reported, I reported *as a former student*. There is just so little information out there for those of us in this particular position: raped on campus but *not as students*.

I started my research on Google because I'm a millennial in the body of a Gen Xer. I'm really, really good at using Google. Yet, I cannot find a single damn thing on Google about this particular issue. I used every targeted search I could imagine to find anything about professors or university employees as campus rape victims or survivors, and there is no helpful information at all.

That's a problem.

So, I'm feeling very disheartened right now because I know, personally, two women in academia who were

raped in ways that definitely involved their institutions, one in her own office on campus, and one by a graduate student in her division. Those are just the two who told me their stories. I'm afraid that we—women employed in academia—might be suffering in secret. Let's not do that anymore.

I am, after all, a lawyer, so I did what I do best: I researched the actual rules. First, I [pulled up the policy](#)—the fine print—at the institution where I made my report. What I found was good news. The campus policy *does* cover employees. Under "Individuals Covered by this Policy," the policy lists an expansive group of folks: "This Policy and associated procedures apply to the conduct of, *and protect*, University students and employees, including faculty members, ... non-faculty employees, ... graduate, professional and doctoral students, post-doctoral scholars, and student employees" and more.

Title IX Covers Employees Too

The problem I'm having with the policy, though, is that I had to dig into the policy to find this information in the first place. When I searched the [university's first-response website](#), the information was so student-focused that I presumed it was only for students.

But the rule we all need to know is this: [Title IX](#) applies to an institution's employees, too.

But the rule we all need to know is this: Title IX applies to an institution's employees, too.

You might already be familiar with the text of Title IX: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." On its [Title IX and Sex Discrimination](#) website, the Department of Education (ED) explains the law in this fashion: "Title IX protects *people* from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance." (I added the emphasis.) In other words, the law is not limited to students—the word is "people."

Whether you, as a victim, choose to report being assaulted, stalked, or harassed to your campus's Title IX office is up to you. I, personally, didn't find reporting to be a satisfactory experience. For a variety of reasons, I believe we have a long way to go before reporting sexual assault becomes a thing that is empowering or even nontraumatizing. If you do choose to report, I suggest bringing someone you trust to stand by your side. I didn't do so, and that was my biggest mistake. I might have been a doctor-lawyer, but I was also a traumatized woman talking about my trauma in a strange man's office, and I was doing it alone.

We might be protected by Title IX, but in the end, Title IX still isn't enough. Title IX doesn't stop rape from happening in the first place, and it doesn't care for us after we've been harmed. In my next columns in this series, I'll talk more about care and what institutions can do about that. 

—KRG