

To: All Faculty and Staff Members &  
Student Leaders of  
Western Oregon University

From: Philip W. Conn

Subject: Appointment of Task Force for Consideration of Policies and Practices  
Regarding Sexual Harassment and Consensual Relationships

Date: February 25, 2005

Earlier this month, both Acting Chancellor George Pernsteiner and Governor Theodore Kulongoski directed that we at Western Oregon University prepare and submit information regarding our policies, procedures, and practices related to sexual harassment and consensual relationships. Their letters are attached. As you can read, the letter from Governor Kulongoski to Chancellor Pernsteiner requires all seven institutions in the Oregon University System to conduct such an inquiry.

We must respond to the chancellor's request by April 18, with our response to the governor to be considered at the June meeting of the State Board of Higher Education. Staff members are already gathering some of the information we are expected to submit, since the time frame is so limited.

Specifically, we have been asked to provide: 1) a compendium of our current policies and procedures and those which were recently replaced; 2) an assessment of the efficacy of our policies and procedures; 3) an assessment of campus practices and beliefs surrounding these matters; and 4) recommendations for additional or changed policies, procedures, and practices that we believe will contribute to the reality and perception of a safe and secure environment for undergraduate and graduate students with respect to sexual harassment and consensual relationships.

In order to include a range of perspectives from faculty, staff, and students and in the interest of conducting this inquiry in a timely manner, I am appointing a ten-member Task Force for Consideration of Policies and Practices Regarding Sexual Harassment and Consensual Relationships. I am pleased that Dr. Brian Caster has agreed to chair the group. The presidents of the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Senate, and the Associated Students of Western Oregon University (ASWOU) assisted Dr. Caster and me in selecting the members. The members are listed alphabetically below:

Hank Bersani, Faculty  
Brian Caster, Faculty (Chair)  
Carl Fisher, Student  
Tina Fuchs, Staff  
Solveig Holmquist, Faculty  
Key Jackson, Student  
Kimberly Jensen, Faculty  
Diana Leos, Staff  
Danielle Newell, Student  
Andrew Russell-Wynings, Staff

In her role as the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer, Judy Vanderburg will provide staff support to the group, and all WOU administrators will assist if and as requested. Dr. Caster is making arrangements for the organizational meeting of the Task Force to be held within the next few days.

During the past few weeks, many of you have expressed thoughts and opinions regarding the issues of sexual harassment and consensual relationships at WOU. It is important for you to share such observations and suggestions for consideration by Task Force members as they conduct this inquiry and work toward preparing a report. Their report will be forwarded to me no later than April 13. We are eager for your input.

Again, thank you for your committed efforts and resolute confidence toward the betterment of Western Oregon University. I am convinced that by facing this challenge squarely, WOU will become even stronger and more highly regarded.